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"Father Callan's work is likewise a valuable and practical Commentary on the Gospels for the busy priest on the mission. To it, such a priest may confidently and easily turn for a plain and concise statement of the meaning of the Evangelical Text he has to explain in his sermons or instructions. The sacred text printed therein is no other than the vernacular one, and the comments thereupon bear as a rule on the very points concerning which he wishes to get an immediate information. The 'Map of Palestine' in Our Lord's time at the beginning of the volume affords him a ready means to locate correctly the particular place or places spoken of in the section he has to explain to his audience, while the 'Index of Subjects' at the end of the work enables him to find at once the page or pages that will supply him with other useful data anent the same person or topic as is referred to in the passage before him.

"Thus then, as an able and experienced teacher of Sacred Scripture, the Rev. Author has really reached the object he had in view, viz., that of putting forth a 'Practical Critical Commentary for Priests and Students.' His work deserves to be widely accepted as a Seminary text-book, and to be extensively used by priests on the mission."

Rev. FRANCIS E. GIGOT.

"The apparatus which higher criticism has recently placed at the disposal of the student of Sacred Scripture, to explain the historical, literary, and theological significance of the Divine message, has very greatly facilitated the understanding and hence the practical usefulness of the Bible as a text-book of religious training. But it has also begotten a tendency to lay overmuch stress on the mere accidentals in favor of the genuineness, integrity, literary perfection, and human credibility of the Inspired Word. The student of theology, the priest who reads the Scriptures,

whether for the purpose of pointing his apostolic message with the thought and expression of revealed truth, or, as he reads his Breviary, for his own spiritual comfort and personal sanctification, finds himself often embarrassed by the variety of ingenious comments. These appeal not only to philological science, history, and archeology, but also to the artificial interpretations suggested by the rationalistic and mythical school of exegesis.

"Under these circumstances *we welcome an exposition which stands midway between the annotated text, with pertinent footnotes, and erudite and lengthy dissertations.* These latter studies are serviceable to the scholar and critic whom they invite into excursions through learned bypaths, but of little or no practical help to the simple inquirer after the true meaning of the inspired writer. For in uttering his divine truth, the latter had to adopt limited forms of human speech that lose their original force through the usages of subsequent times and surroundings. The importance of clarity in restating the original thought of the writer is of particular importance when we come to study the Gospels, since in them we have the sum and fulfilment of the entire inspired history that precedes.

"Father Callan writes for ecclesiastical students and priests chiefly, though of course his commentary has a much wider bearing for good. He writes as a teacher, taking into account the particular limitations of his pupils who cannot get a complete survey of the importance, meaning, and uses of the Gospel from the notes of a lecture course, and who are not capable of selecting for themselves such aids to study as a complete bibliography might furnish to the advanced student or the professor. Accordingly the author has so chosen and arranged his material as to give us not merely an interpretation of the text, as is done in less comprehensive manuals dealing with the Gospels, *but also the essential background and atmosphere* for the correct appreciation of that interpretation.

"Thus the introduction to each of the Four Gospels furnishes a general but at the same time a critical glance at the life of the Evangelist, the time and place of his writing, the special purpose and motive that actuated the written presentation of the figure and teaching of Christ, and the language in which it was originally written. In this way account is taken of the peculiar idioms, figures of speech, human appeals and personal or local characteristics that distinguish one Gospel from another.

"Similarly, we are made familiar with the reasons that stand for the authenticity and integrity of the narrative. It would lead us too far into detail to examine the distinct values of the exegesis adopted by Father Callan, and we must here content ourselves with merely mentioning the *terse and satisfactory way in which each phrase or word is commented upon.* Facts are collated, authorities referred to, and dates, places, persons, and circumstances that throw light on the meaning, are everywhere introduced in a simple, matter-of-fact way, so as to leave the impression that the author spared no pains to inform himself for the sake of removing doubts and ambiguities in the mind of the reader.

"The typographical arrangement of the book, its general form and make-up, *admirably serve the purpose of a manual for students in the seminary.* With the copious topical index and its logical, orderly arrangement, the volume will prove a welcome addition to the clerical library."

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—*The Ecclesiastical Review.*

"Any new commentary on the Sacred Scriptures is a notable event, and one may reasonably ask at the outset, Why a new commentary? The author answers the question by informing us that he knows all the excellent commentaries that already exist and appreciates them. He acknowledges that they answer the purpose of full and exhaustive treatises and reference works, but none of them answers the need of the student for a handbook, and therefore the present volume.

"Father Callan knows this need because his years of experience in the classroom have brought it home to him. He knows also what such a book should contain, and therefore he approaches his task with a definite end in view. In treating a profuse subject briefly there will always be a difference of opinion as to what shall be included or excluded, what shall be treated briefly or at length, what shall be adopted or rejected. The author was fully aware of this, and therefore he states his mode of procedure thus:

"A suitable commentary on the Gospels, or on any part of the New Testament, must provide many things. It must not only explain and interpret the sacred text in conformity with the teachings of the Church and the doctrines of the Fathers

and the theologians, but it must also, to be profitable, take into account the conditions and needs of the times and of those who are to study and use it. Hence it must avoid excess in length and excess in brevity. It must take care to treat everything suited to its end and purpose, but it must at the same time strive to avoid things useless and irrelevant. Those for whom he writes need, he says, a clear explanation of the meaning of the sacred text; a clear removal of chronological and topographical difficulties of moment; a reconciliation of historical and other apparent discrepancies, and an indication of dogmatic and moral passages on which theology depends. And all this in the briefest and simplest manner. Such a commentary on the Gospels the author has endeavored to provide. Clearness of vision as to the need, full equipment acquired by years of study and experience, united to long, patient labor, have produced the result which we see before us.

"The book should have a large sale, because it answers a need that is pressing and definite. The reverend author is to be congratulated on the completion of so important a task."

—*The American Catholic Quarterly Review.*

"The study of Holy Scripture, and more particularly of the Gospels, is an essential part of the education of those who aspire to the priesthood. The average reader or student of Holy Writ, however, needs almost constant help in order to understand many of the things to be found therein. Hence the use of commentaries in general, and the specific value, in particular, of 'The Four Gospels, with a Practical, Critical Commentary for Priests and Students,' by the Rev. C. J. Callan, O.P. It contains the full text of the Gospels in English, dealing with them in their different aspects—as books of history, of theology, and of piety; and explaining problems of topography, chronology, language, etc. A substantial octavo volume of 580 pages, it is not too bulky for convenient use in the class-room, and yet is sufficiently comprehensive to suit the purpose of any other than specialists in Sacred Scripture. The judicious use of varying styles of type employed in the text facilitates one's reference to particular phrases or expressions in the different passages; and the nature of the commentary itself will be found fully to justify the epithets employed in the title; it is both practical and critical. Other excellent features of the work are a harmony of the Gospels, a complete index of subjects, a bibliography, and two excellent maps."

—*The Ave Maria.*

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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

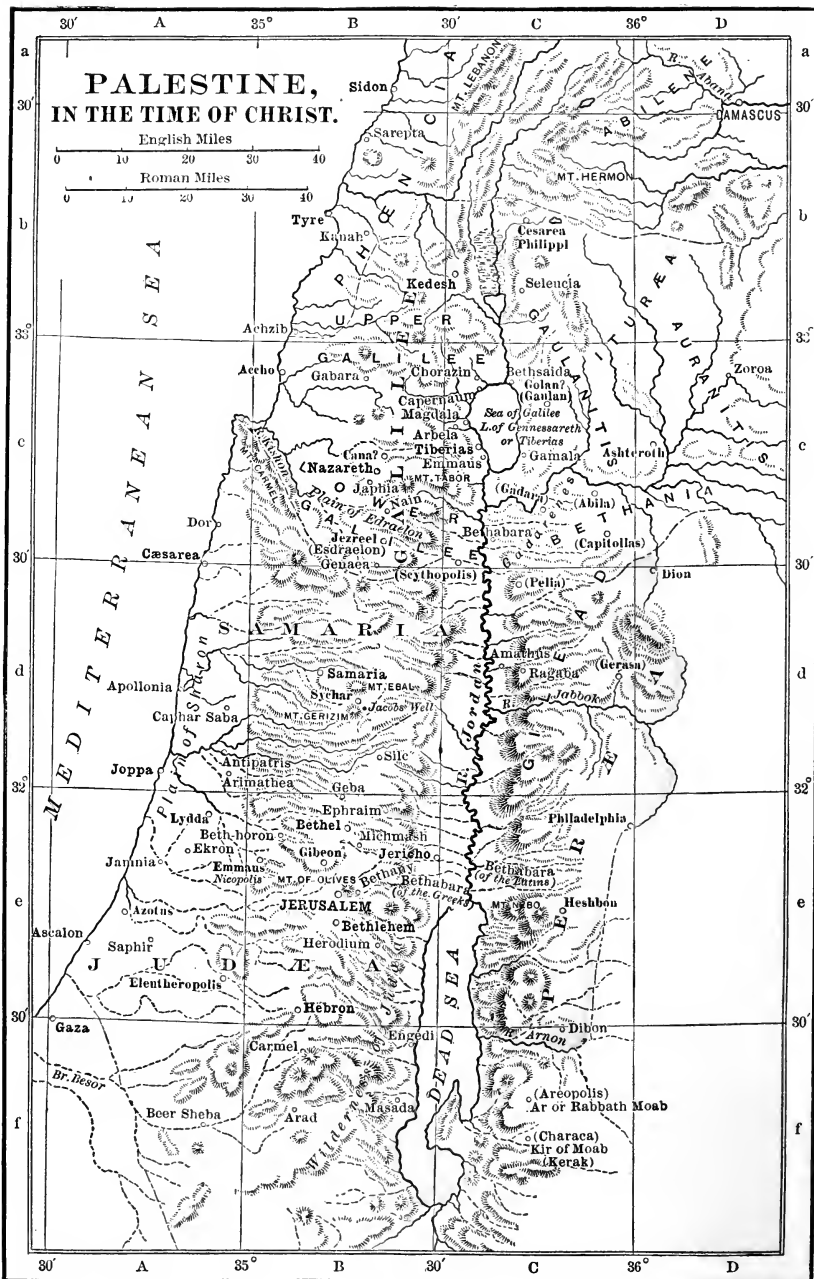




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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

WITH A  
PRACTICAL CRITICAL COMMENTARY  
FOR PRIESTS AND STUDENTS

BY  
REV. CHARLES J. CALLAN, O.P.

*Lector of Sacred Theology and Professor of Sacred Scripture  
in the Catholic Foreign Mission Seminary,  
Ossining, N. Y.*



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## PREFACE

So generous has been the reception accorded our previous work on the Four Gospels by priests and students generally that we have felt entirely encouraged in preparing and bringing to completion this present and similar treatise on the Acts of the Apostles. As in that other work, so in this one, the aim has been to give to ecclesiastical students and to priests as a body a clear, brief, and yet, for all practical purposes, a sufficiently thorough, exposition of the meaning of the sacred text, together with an explanation of the principal difficulties found therein.

The supreme importance of a knowledge of the Acts need hardly be insisted on. Even a slight acquaintance with the nature and contents of the book is quite enough to place beyond dispute its entire usefulness, and even necessity, for the Church historian, the theologian, the Christian apologist, and the preacher. This a few points will easily illustrate.

St. Luke in his Gospel tells us of the fulfillment of the promise of redemption in the Incarnation, Resurrection, and Ascension of our Lord; and in this book he records the beginnings of the Christian Church and of the final dispensation of the Holy Ghost in the regeneration and salvation of men's souls. The Acts are therefore a record of the continuation of Christ's work on earth and of the fulfillment of His last solemn promise to His disciples. Shortly before His Ascension the Saviour told His Apostles that, beginning at Jerusalem, they should soon go forth into the whole world "preaching the Gospel to every creature and to all nations,"<sup>1</sup> and that, fortified by the Holy Ghost whom He would first send upon them, they should "be witnesses unto him in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth."<sup>2</sup> St. Luke in this his second book has shown us how all these predictions were verified. In the first seven chapters of his work he describes the establishment of the Church and the preaching of the Gospel in Jerusalem. In chapters eight and nine the spread of the Gospel to the other parts of Judea and to Samaria is recounted. And in the remaining chapters we are told how the Church was extended and the glad tidings carried to all nations, even to the heart of Imperial Rome.

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Acts i. 8.

In the book of Acts, then, we have an authentic and reliable account of the beginnings of Christianity and of Church organization. The volume presupposes Christ's teachings, the essentials of which are given us by the Gospels. It is in the Gospels that we are told how the Saviour chose His first Apostles and disciples and sent them on their first local missions; it is there we read of the primacy conferred on St. Peter, and of the sacred character and the miraculous powers given to the twelve; there we hear the Divine Master, through beautiful parables and illustrations, repeatedly depicting the nature of His new Kingdom, the Church, and promising to endow it with infallibility and indefectibility; there we see the institution of the Holy Eucharist and the august sacrifice of the Mass, of the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance, and hear the Lord foretelling the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles with all His wondrous powers and gifts. But it is chiefly in the book of Acts that we see how these divine institutions and prophetic messages were reduced to action and found their accomplishment,—how, namely, the Church grew, like the mustard seed, and spread wide its branches over the earth, how the Apostles actually received the plenitude of the gifts of the Holy Ghost and then went forth to preach and teach in the power and by the authority of that same Divine Spirit, how Peter assumed his position as head and exercised his divinely commissioned rule over all, how the first converts were made and the various communities organized, how Bishops, priests, and ministers were consecrated and ordained to preach, baptize, celebrate the divine mysteries, and thus carry on Christ's work on earth.

In His final instructions to His Apostles before ascending up on high our divine Lord solemnly pledged His word that He would ever abide with His Church: "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."<sup>1</sup> The Saviour was not going to be a departed leader and dead master, but the living God and Lord of the vineyard He had so carefully planted, of the Church He had founded, of the flock He had purchased at so great a price. Though invisible for the most part, His presence was to be continuous and active; and St. Luke in the Acts is constantly emphasizing this most consoling truth. At Pentecost Christ sent the Holy Ghost, as He had promised.<sup>2</sup> When the lame man was cured by the Apostles at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, Peter declared to the multitude that the miracle was wrought in the name and by the power of the living, ascended Lord.<sup>3</sup> The living Christ on His throne of glory was seen by the innocent eyes of Stephen, the first martyr.<sup>4</sup> Christ appeared to Saul on his way to Damascus, converting the great persecutor into a vessel of election;<sup>5</sup> He conferred with Peter on the

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Acts vii. 55.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 33.

<sup>5</sup> Acts ix. 3-7.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iii. 16.

housetop at Joppe in behalf of the Gentiles;<sup>1</sup> and He opened the heart of Lydia at Thyatira that she might hearken to the words of Paul.<sup>2</sup> When Paul was in distress at Corinth, the Lord spoke to him and bid him cease to worry and fear.<sup>3</sup> In fine, as we learn from St. Luke, it was the ever-present, though invisible Christ, who at all times gave direction and comfort to the Apostles and in the power of whose name they labored, suffered, and wrought miracles.<sup>4</sup>

We know, further, as partly said already, that, according to our Lord's loving promises to His disciples, the Holy Ghost was to act a most important part in the life of the Church. As the Saviour Himself was to remain the invisible head of the Church throughout all time, so the Holy Ghost was to be its soul, the secret source of its vitality, strength, and durability. The Church was to live and flourish by force of the Holy Ghost, Christ's own Divine Spirit. And not only was this Holy Spirit to give life and strength to the Church, but He was to be the instructor and guide of the Apostles. He was to teach them all truth and recall to their minds all that Christ, while on earth, had taught them: "But when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will teach you all truth . . . and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."<sup>5</sup> But without the book of the Acts we should not know how marked was the verification of all these things in the early days of the Church. St. Luke in the Acts is ever indicating and stressing the personality and the work of the Holy Ghost. In no other book of the Bible is this Divine Person so frequently mentioned. His manifest presence is directly referred to no less than fifty-seven times. It was He that gave formal birth to the Church on the day of Pentecost;<sup>6</sup> He that qualified the candidates for the office of deaconship,<sup>7</sup> that strengthened the converts of Samaria on whom Peter and John laid hands,<sup>8</sup> and that fell upon Cornelius and his family during Peter's preaching at Caesarea.<sup>9</sup> It was the Holy Ghost that enabled Stephen to speak with a wisdom which confounded his adversaries,<sup>10</sup> that filled the soul of Saul when Ananias came to him,<sup>11</sup> that gave Barnabas his fiery eloquence and separated him and Paul and sent them out on their mission.<sup>12</sup> Again it was the Holy Ghost that chose the Bishops of the Church, and that presided in their councils, and directed all the deliberations and decisions of the Church.<sup>13</sup>

From these and the foregoing facts it becomes clearly evident how highly important to the student of Church history and theology

<sup>1</sup> Acts x. 13-16.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xviii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> John xvi. 13; xiv. 26.

<sup>4</sup> Acts vi. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Acts x. 44.

<sup>6</sup> Acts ix. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Acts i. 16, 24-26; xv. 28; xvi. 6.

<sup>8</sup> Acts xvi. 14.

<sup>9</sup> Acts iii. 6, 16; ix. 34.

<sup>10</sup> Acts ii. 1-4.

<sup>11</sup> Acts viii. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Acts vi. 5, 10.

<sup>13</sup> Acts xi. 24; xiii. 2.

is a thorough acquaintance with the Acts of the Apostles. Not that the book pretends to be, in any sense, a complete record of all that occurred in the early Church, nor to give anything like a comprehensive exposition of all the doctrines taught in the Apostolic age; nevertheless the facts and teachings which it does give us are not only priceless, but are to a great extent unrecorded by any other reliable book of those early times. This book is the only trustworthy account we possess of the beginnings of organized Christianity. Without it we should never know just how the Church, guided by Christ, its invisible head, and inspired and strengthened by the Holy Spirit, emerged from its Jewish seat and influences and spread itself over the Gentile world. St. Luke has therefore made plain to us what would otherwise be largely insoluble short of a miraculous explanation; he has furnished us with the connecting-link between the message left the world by Christ and the diffusion of that sacred message in the Church divinely established and extended to all parts of the world.

But necessary as is the book of Acts to the historian and the theologian, it is of no less consequence to the Christian Apologist, whose task is to defend the faith and prove the divine origin and the foundation of Christian revelation and teaching. To show this we need only refer to some of its principal testimonies regarding the Resurrection of Christ and the miracles of the Apostles. From the first days of the Apostles' preaching down to our own times the Resurrection has been the one great argument in support of Christianity. It proves at once Christ's divinity, the divine authority of His teachings, and of His Church. In like manner the miracles worked by the Apostles in confirmation of their preaching and heavenly mission were an incontestable proof of the truth of their teachings and authority.

Now in every one of St. Peter's sermons recorded in the Acts we find the Apostle insisting on the truth of the Resurrection. In his very first sermon to the Jews on the day of Pentecost he fearlessly proclaimed this great doctrine, and proved it by an appeal to the Jewish prophets.<sup>1</sup> Likewise in his sermon after the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate;<sup>2</sup> in his addresses to the priests and rulers;<sup>3</sup> and in his discourse to Cornelius and his household the Resurrection of Christ was his fundamental teaching, and he declared that he and the other Apostles were witnesses of it.<sup>4</sup> St. Paul also in his discourse at Antioch in Pisidia, and later on to the Athenians, explicitly affirmed the doctrine of the Resurrection.<sup>5</sup> The word "witness" occurs twenty-three times in the Acts. The Apostles and preachers spoken of in this book were witnesses of

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 24-30.

<sup>2</sup> Acts iii. 15, 26.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iv. 8-12; v. 30-32.

<sup>4</sup> Acts x. 40-43.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xiii. 27-30; xvii. 31.

what they saw and knew, and in all they bear witness to our Lord's Resurrection twenty-nine times.

And as regards the miracles of the Apostles which the Acts record, and which were a divine guarantee of the truth of their preaching, we need only to recall some of the leading ones — such as the miracle of Pentecost,<sup>1</sup> the cure of the lame man,<sup>2</sup> the conversion of St. Paul,<sup>3</sup> the healing of Aneas and the resurrection of Tabitha,<sup>4</sup> the deliverance of Peter,<sup>5</sup> the raising of Eutychus to life,<sup>6</sup> and the several cures performed by St. Paul<sup>7</sup> — to be convinced of the apologetical worth of this splendid book. The Apostles preached in the name of Christ and under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and St. Luke has not failed to record the miracles they performed in confirmation of their preaching.

The information furnished us by the Acts regarding ecclesiastical organization is not without its singular weight and meaning also. From it we learn who were the ministers, and what was the order of government in the primitive Church. At Jerusalem we see that the community of Christians was first governed by the Apostles; and later, as the preaching spread it was presided over by James the Less, the first Bishop of that see.<sup>8</sup> From the beginning we find presbyters, who were priests and Bishops ordained and consecrated by the Apostles themselves, assisting the Apostles in the discharge of their higher functions,<sup>9</sup> while deacons were appointed and ordained to aid in ministering to the needs of the faithful.<sup>10</sup> In the communities outside of Palestine it was also an Apostle who first exercised supreme authority by founding the various sees, either directly, or through appointed representatives, and left them in charge of presbyters, Bishops and priests.<sup>11</sup> Everywhere the hierarchy exercised its authority by virtue of its divine institution and commission.<sup>12</sup> Hence also we find the faithful in the different churches deeply devoted to their ecclesiastical superiors, and manifesting at all times signs of their filial submission and obedience.

Thus from the Acts we can prove that the hierarchy of the church consisted of three degrees — Bishops, priests, and deacons — from the days of the Apostles, just as it is known to have existed in Asia Minor from the beginning of the second century, and, soon after, in all Christendom. The presbyters — the Bishops and priests — and the deacons received their sacred consecration and authority from the Apostles, as the Apostles themselves had received theirs from Christ.

<sup>1</sup> Acts ii. 1-13.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ix. 1-30; xxii. 4-16; xxvi. 9-18.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xii. 6-17.

<sup>4</sup> Acts xiv. 8-10; xvi. 16-18; xxviii. 7-10.

<sup>5</sup> Acts xi. 30; xv. 23; xxi. 18, 19.

<sup>12</sup> Acts xiv. 22; xx. 17, 28.

<sup>3</sup> Acts iii. 1-11.

<sup>6</sup> Acts ix. 31-43.

<sup>8</sup> Acts xx. 7-12.

<sup>9</sup> Acts xxi. 18.

<sup>10</sup> Acts vi. 1-10.

<sup>11</sup> Acts xiv. 22.

Finally the book of the Acts can be of great usefulness to the preacher and sacred orator. Besides several notable addresses,<sup>1</sup> it has preserved for us eleven precious sermons of special import—five from St. Peter,<sup>2</sup> five from St. Paul,<sup>3</sup> and one from St. Stephen.<sup>4</sup> These sacred discourses are beautiful specimens of the content and method of the Apostolic preaching. Those of St. Peter's, very simple in style and doctrine, were carefully adapted to his auditory, and artfully arranged to carry his point. His theme is always the same: This Jesus whom you have crucified is the Messiah who was foretold by the prophets; in His name alone can men be saved. St. Paul's sermons were addressed to five different classes of hearers, and they all reveal the Apostle's marvelous depth and flexibility of character. The oratorical art and mastery of style which they also display are truly characteristic of the argumentative force and eloquence of the great Apostle of the Gentiles. The discourse of St. Stephen is rather a survey of Jewish history—of God's dealings with the chosen people, and of their attitude in turn toward God and the many benefits He had conferred upon them. In the sermons of St. Peter and St. Paul we have samples of the preaching of the Apostles to their Jewish and pagan audiences, and from them we gather a notion of the character of the oral Gospel which was preached long before it was committed to writing.

With this we think we have said enough to point out how a study of the Acts of the Apostles should be highly profitable, and is even necessary for ecclesiastical students and priests. Obviously the commentary which follows does not pretend to be exhaustive; and if anything like an exhaustive treatment of the subject had been undertaken and effected, the whole design and object we had in writing the book would have been defeated. Our whole purpose has been to give something substantial, sound, and useful,—something which, while based on tradition and the best of older authorities, has not failed to take account of the recent studies of reliable scholars.

The work has been termed "practical," inasmuch as it seeks to eliminate such opinions, discussions, explanations, and theories, as, from a useful point of view, might be considered altogether curious and unnecessary; and yet the treatment has been called also "critical," since it essays to give, although in condensed and easy form, the most probable arguments and conclusions and the helpful results of the best critical works and studies, chiefly among Catholics, touching the important questions involved in the subject. Brevity,

<sup>1</sup> Acts i. 16-22; xv. 7-11; 13-21; xxiv. 10-21; xxvi. 2-29.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 14-40; iii. 12-26; iv. 8-12; v. 29-32; x. 34-43.

<sup>3</sup> Acts xiii. 16-41; xiv. 14-16; xvii. 22-31; xx. 18-35; xx. 1-21.

<sup>4</sup> Acts vii. 2-55.



## PREFACE

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clarity, and conciseness have therefore been sought; but, at the same time, such numbers of authorities and explanations have been enlisted and marshaled to the end in view as will be sufficient, we hope, to satisfy all who are not themselves specialists, and who do not, consequently, care for an extended and purely technical consideration of everything treated. With the hope, therefore, that this treatise may be found helpful to those, at least, for whom it was written, it is humbly and respectfully submitted to its readers.

THE AUTHOR.



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# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## INTRODUCTION

I. **The Title.** The title of this book is not the same in all MSS. In the Sinaitic, in fact, it is simply *πράξεις*, *Acts*; and in the Vatican we read *πράξεις ἀποστόλων*, *Acts of Apostles*. Our present title, *The Acts of the Apostles*, is of a later date, and does not so accurately express the contents of the book as does either of the first two. Critics rightly accept the title given in the Vatican MS. as the most correct, as well as the most ancient, for the book has to do, not with the doings of all the Apostles, but almost exclusively with those of Peter and Paul. There is only brief reference to James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, to James the Greater, to John the Evangelist, and to Barnabas.

Although the title of this book is of great antiquity, it is generally admitted, on account of its diversity in different MSS., that St. Luke did not give it to his treatise; it was later prefixed to the work by some one else. The meaning of the word *Acts* is *doings*, *labors*, *deeds*. The author implies that his book is a second treatise, the first being the Third Gospel.

II. **Authenticity.** The author of the treatise on the *acts* or *doings* of the Apostles was none other than St. Luke, the writer of the Third Gospel. Of this we are assured in the first place by the whole of Christian antiquity, and by all Catholic, as well as the great majority of Protestant and rationalistic scholars. That the Apostolic Fathers and early ecclesiastical writers were acquainted with the Acts, and attributed them to St. Luke, is evident from their writings. St. Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* iii. 13-15) cites many passages of the Acts and attributed them to St. Luke, whom he calls the "companion and coöperator of Paul." Origen in his Commentary on the Acts and in his book against Celsus (vi. 11) explicitly affirms that Luke wrote the Acts of the Apostles. Clement of Alex. (*Strom.*

v. 12), referring to the Acts, says: "As Luke in the Acts of the Apostles cites Paul who said: 'Ye men of Athens,' " etc. (Acts xvii. 22). Similar affirmations and references are also found in the Muratorian Frag., in Tertullian (*De Jej. c. x*), and in Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl. iii. 4*).

But not only are we assured from tradition of the Lucan authorship of the Acts of the Apostles, but also from the book itself. The author, it is true, does not give his name, but there are so many things in his treatise to assure us of his identity that no unprejudiced mind can doubt who he was. The same person wrote both the Third Gospel and the Acts. This is clear, (a) from the striking resemblance in the prefaces to the two works, which dedicate them both to the same Theophilus; (b) from the fact that the author refers to a "former treatise" whose description bears every mark of the Third Gospel; (c) from the sameness of style between the Acts and the Gospel; (d) from the technical medical terms which occur in both treatises, and which point to the one author whom St. Paul called "Luke the most dear physician" (Col. iv. 14); (e) finally, from the fact that the author of the Acts often speaks of himself as the assistant and companion of St. Paul, which assistant and companion was none other than St. Luke, who accompanied St. Paul on the latter's second missionary journey, who rejoined the Apostle at Philippi on his third missionary journey, and thereafter became his constant companion and coöperator till some time after St. Paul first came to Rome.

St. Luke was a native of Antioch in Syria. That he was not a Jew we are assured by St. Paul, who, in Col. iv. 14, names him apart from those "of the circumcision" mentioned in Col. iv. 11. Little is known about St. Luke's life and activities between the two imprisonments of St. Paul in Rome and after the Apostle's death. He died in Bithynia (Boeotia?), according to St. Jerome, at the age of eighty-four and was buried at Constantinople.

**III. Time and Place of Writing.** It is the common opinion that St. Luke composed the Acts of the Apostles during St. Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, and that the treatise was therefore concluded towards the end of the year 63-64. That the book was written before the year 70, or even 67, seems certain from the fact that the author, who speaks of events of contemporary secular history



as a living witness, makes no mention of the fall of Jerusalem, or of the death of St. Peter, but speaks only of the latter's delivery from the power of Herod Agrippa and his departure "into another place" (Acts xii. 17). Further, it seems beyond question that the composition of the Acts was completed before St. Paul's release from his Roman captivity in the year 64. They contain a detailed account of the Apostle's arrest and escort to Caesarea, of his protest and appeal to Rome, of his voyage and arrival in the Eternal City, and of his swift imprisonment there, without, however, any mention of his final condemnation or liberation. A narration of all these events, without a declaration in the same book of their more important outcome, we could hardly suppose, except in the hypothesis that the book was finished before a decision had been reached. Now we know that St. Paul could not have been in Rome in A.D. 64, when Nero set fire to the city and cast the suspicion on the Christians, else he would have fallen before the wrath of that bloodthirsty tyrant. The conclusion, therefore, seems inevitable that the Acts were not written before 60, nor after 64 of our era.

It is the opinion of St. Jerome (*De Viris Illust.* c. 7) that the Acts were written in Rome. This opinion, which all eminent critics do not share, would seem to be strongly supported by passages of the book itself, particularly by the final chapter.

**IV. Readers and Purpose.** The Acts of the Apostles, like the Third Gospel, are first directed and dedicated to Theophilus, an illustrious Gentile Christian whom St. Luke himself had most probably instructed and converted to the faith. It is, however, certain that they were also intended for a much wider circle of readers. That these readers were the Christian converts of Rome to whom St. Paul had preached and to whom also St. Luke had destined the Third Gospel, seems evident from the contents of the book. The author, while continually emphasizing the doctrines of St. Paul, finds it necessary frequently to explain the places and customs of Palestine, Greece, Macedonia, and the like, but never those of Italy; he supposes his readers to be entirely conversant with the localities and habits of this latter country. This seems sufficient to show that his readers were to be the Christians of Italy.

The purpose of the Acts was the same as that of the Third Gospel. The former, in fact, were intended as a natural complement of the

latter. St. Luke's object, then, in writing the Acts was to establish for his Roman readers the certainty of the Christian revelation and the universality of salvation brought to the world by Christ. In support of the truth of Christianity he recounts miracles and prodigies wrought by God through the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, and afterwards in confirmation of the doctrines they were preaching. To make it plain that the revelation and salvation given by the Messiah was for all mankind, he shows that the preaching of the Gospel, begun first in Jerusalem, spread to Galilee and Samaria, then was carried by St. Peter to the Gentiles, and finally through St. Paul was extended to the pagan world and to the heart of imperial Rome. These were the things which St. Luke had primarily in view in writing the Acts. But it is probable that he also had in mind, as a secondary purpose, to show the identity of doctrine taught by St. Peter and St. Paul, and the unanimity which existed between the two Apostles. He was well aware of the division which, for a time, had sprung up among the faithful regarding the apparent differences of teaching of Sts. Peter and Paul relative to the necessity for salvation of the Mosaic rites and observances. He knew that St. Paul, for appearing to resist St. Peter in this matter, had suffered violent persecutions and calumnies, and that there had been attempts made to discredit the Apostle in Rome, as a rebel against lawful authority. Accordingly, in order to remove these persecutions and misrepresentations, St. Luke endeavored in the Acts to make known the identity of doctrine, and the perfect agreement which existed between the two Apostles, and to show also that St. Paul was at all times respectfully obedient to the Roman authority, even when falsely represented to it by his Jewish enemies.

**V. Sources of Information.** St. Luke was to a great extent an eye-witness of what he records in the latter part of the Acts. The rest of his information he gathered largely from those who had been eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, such as St. Peter, St. James the Less, Barnabas, and perhaps St. John.

Being a native of Antioch and the intimate companion of St. Paul, St. Luke obviously had a personal knowledge of all those events which pertain to the Church at Antioch, and of those of which he speaks in the first person (xi. 19 ff.; 27, 28; xvi. 10 ff.; xxi. 1-8, 10-12, 14-18; xxvii. 2; xxviii. 16). All that has reference to the

conversion, journeys, labors, and trials of St. Paul, he could have learned from the Apostle himself or his disciples. He traveled with St. Paul from Troas to Philippi (xvi. 10-17); on the Apostle's next missionary journey he accompanied him from Philippi to Miletus (xx. 5-15), and from Miletus to Jerusalem (xxi. 1-18); he was with Paul at Caesarea and made the voyage with him from Caesarea to Rome (xxvii-xxviii. 16).

The early happenings in the Church at Jerusalem, the labors and ministrations of the Apostles, the miracles performed and the persecutions there sustained, could all have been known from St. Peter or St. James, with whom St. Luke remained for a while when in Jerusalem with St. Paul (xxi. 18), or more probably still from St. Mark, who was Luke's companion in Rome during the first imprisonment of St. Paul (Col. iv. 10, 14; Philem. 24). St. Mark, who had embraced the faith at an early age, who was a near relative of St. Barnabas, and who had been for long the intimate companion of St. Peter, was assuredly a reliable source of information in regard to all that took place in the Church at Jerusalem. St. Luke could not have had an informant more reliable, a witness more thoroughly instructed.

As St. Luke, in company with St. Paul, enjoyed for a time at Caesarea the society of Philip the Deacon (xxi. 8), it is more than probable that the history of the latter which we read in the Acts was obtained from the holy deacon himself.

Besides personal and oral sources of information, it also seems likely that St. Luke in the Acts made use of some written documents. This opinion is held by Knabenbauer, Crelier, Sales, Belser, Jacquier, and other Catholic scholars, in particular with regard to the first chapters of the book, where we find so many Hebraisms and citations from the Old Testament. At any rate the opinion of those rationalists who say that the book is made up of a number of disconnected documents which can be traced to sources called A, B, C, etc., or who hold that the discourses of the Acts are nothing more than literary compositions of the author put into the mouth of different persons, is too absurd for a moment's consideration. Such an opinion is opposed to the whole character of the book, as any fair-minded reader can see for himself. See decision of the Biblical Commission, page 197.

**VI. Historical Character.** From the sources of St. Luke's information—in that he was an eye-witness, or acquired his knowledge from those who had been eye-witnesses of the events which he narrates, it would seem that the trustworthiness of the Acts should be admitted without restriction. This becomes undoubted when we add to the fulness and accuracy of the knowledge he possessed the naturalness, simplicity, and candor which everywhere pervade his treatise. There is no trace of uncertainty, no sign of insincerity in anything he says.

We are, however, still further persuaded of the trustworthiness of the Acts by the many remarkable resemblances and agreements between them and the Epistles of St. Paul. Compare, for example, Acts i. 13; ii. 37 ff.; vi. 2 with Gal. i. 17, 18; 1 Cor. xv. 5, where the twelve Apostles, of whom Peter was the leader, are spoken of as the heads of the Church at Jerusalem;—Acts v. 40; viii. 1-3; xxiv. 17, 18 with 1 Thess. ii. 14; Rom. xv. 25, 26; 2 Cor. ix. 10 ff., where the suffering and poverty of the faithful at Jerusalem is described;—Acts i. 14; xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18 with 1 Cor. ix. 5; xv. 7; Gal. ii. 9, 12, where information is given concerning the brethren of the Lord and St. James;—Acts xxi. 39; xxii. 3; xxiii. 6; xxvi. 5 with Philip. iii. 5;—Acts ix. 1, 15, 17 with 1 Tim. i. 13; 1 Cor. xv. 8;—Acts ix. 24, 25 with 2 Cor. xi. 32, 33;—Acts xiii. 50; xiv. 1, 7, 19, 21; xvi. 23, 24 with 2 Tim. iii. 10, 11; 1 Thess. ii. 2, etc., where the life of St. Paul, his origin, his zeal as a Pharisee, his conversion, his labors and sufferings for the Gospel are described in detail. Many other parallel passages might be cited, but these are sufficient to show notable agreement between the Epistles of St. Paul and the Acts, and to establish the consequent truthfulness of the latter.

The author of the Acts, in fine, was so well informed concerning the manners, customs, laws, ceremonies, and superstitions of the peoples to whom St. Paul preached; he was so well acquainted with the laws and ruling authorities of such places and cities as Cyprus, Philippi in Macedonia, Thessalonica, and Ephesus, that one is forced to conclude that he either had actual personal experience of them, or must have received his information from those who did have such acquaintance with them. Cf. Jacquier, *Hist. des livres du N. T.*, tom. iii. 2d ed., p. 94 ff.; Vigouroux, *Le N. T. et les decouv.*

*arch.*, 2d ed., pp. 199, 211, 231, and 273 ff.; Crelier, *La Sainte Bible*, *Les Actes des Apôtres*; Sales, *La Sacra Bibbia*, vol. i.

**VII. Division of the Acts.** The Acts of the Apostles are sometimes divided into two general parts—The Acts of St. Peter (i–xiii. 3) and the Acts of St. Paul (xiii. 4–xxviii). But they may be more minutely divided into three main parts, besides an introduction.

In the introduction (i. 1–26), after a brief allusion to the Third Gospel, the author speaks at some length about the Ascension of Jesus into heaven and His last appearances to His disciples, and about the choosing of St. Matthias to fill the place of Judas in the Apostolic college.

In the first part (ii–viii. 3) St. Luke treats of the preaching of the Gospel in Jerusalem. He describes the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost and the resultant marvelous effects produced in the Apostles. He gives some of the discourses of St. Peter to the people and before the Sanhedrim, recalls the fervor and sanctity of the first Christians, the early persecutions, the first miracles of the Apostles, the choosing of the seven deacons, and the martyrdom of St. Stephen.

In the second part (viii. 4–xii) we have the extension of the Gospel to Samaria, and thence to the Gentiles of Damascus and Antioch. In Samaria Philip the deacon converts the Samaritans and baptizes the eunuch. Going to Damascus Saul, the great persecutor of the Christians, is converted and begins to preach in the synagogues the Resurrection and divinity of Christ. Being persecuted by the Jews he flies to Jerusalem and joins the Apostles, but soon, on account of another persecution, retires to Tarsus. Peter visits the churches, performs some miracles, and baptizes Cornelius and his household, thus opening the Church to the Gentiles. Soon afterwards the Gospel is preached in Phoenicia, in Cyprus, and at Antioch. The first church is founded at Antioch, in which the majority of the converts are from paganism. Paul goes thither. At Jerusalem, in a new persecution, Herod has St. James put to death; St. Peter is cast into prison, but is miraculously liberated by an angel.

In the third part (xiii–xxviii) is described the spread of the Gospel in the pagan world. By a special revelation of the Holy

Ghost Sts. Paul and Barnabas are chosen at Antioch to carry the Gospel tidings to the world. Paul, with Barnabas, setting out from Antioch on his first missionary journey, goes to Cyprus, then to Antioch in Pisidia, to Iconium, to Lystra, to Derbe, and finally, returning by way of Attalia, the harbor of Perge, the two missionaries come to Antioch whence they departed (xiii-xiv).

Shortly after the Council at Jerusalem Paul starts on his second missionary journey. In the midst of difficulties and persecutions of every kind he travels over Asia Minor, goes to Macedonia, preaches at Thessalonica, Berea, then at Athens and Corinth in Greece, and finally at Ephesus, from where he sails to Caesarea in Palestine, goes up to Jerusalem for a brief visit, and returns to Antioch in Syria (xv. 35-xviii. 22).

On his third missionary journey St. Paul, starting again from Antioch, passes through Galatia and Phrygia and comes to Ephesus, and there remains for over two years. Being forced by a tumult of the silversmiths to leave Ephesus, the Apostle sails from Troas to Macedonia. Leaving Macedonia he pays another visit to Corinth, whence he had intended to return to Jerusalem by sea, but in order to avoid the Jews who had plotted to kill him, he goes back through Macedonia to Philippi. From Philippi he sails to Troas, travels on foot from Troas to Assos, and by ship sails from Assos to Miletus, touching Mitylene, Chios, Samos, and Trogylium. At Miletus he bids farewell to the clergy of Ephesus, takes ship direct for Syria, leaving Cyprus on the left. Landing at Tyre, he remains there a few days and then sails to Caesarea, whence he proceeds by land to Jerusalem. At Jerusalem he is arrested, taken back to Caesarea, and there imprisoned. Having protested his innocence in vain, he appeals to Caesar, and by invitation of the Emperor is brought to Rome under military guard. In Rome he is put in prison for two years (xviii. 23-xxviii).

# THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

## CHAPTER I

PROLOGUE, 1-3.

THE FINAL INSTRUCTIONS OF JESUS TO THE APOSTLES,  
4-8.

JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN, 9-11.

THE APOSTLES RETURN TO JERUSALEM AND PREPARE TO  
RECEIVE THE HOLY GHOST, 12-14.

THE ELECTION OF MATTHIAS TO THE APOSTOLIC COLLEGE,  
15-26.

1. The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, of all things which Jesus began to do and to teach,

2. Until the day on which, giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up.

1. **The former treatise** (*πρῶτον λόγον*); i.e., the Third Gospel, of which also St. Luke was the author. The use of *πρῶτος*, which really means *first*, instead of *πρότερος*, *former*, would seem to imply that St. Luke wrote, or intended to write, a third work; but such a conclusion is not warranted. The author merely wishes to refer to his previous work without saying whether it was followed by one or more.

**Theophilus** was an influential Gentile whom St. Luke had most probably converted to the faith. See Luke i. 3.

**Of all things**, etc.; i.e., of the principal things, works, and teachings of our Lord. The words are not to be taken too literally, as we know from John xxiii. 25.

2. **Giving commands by the Holy Ghost.** The words, **by the Holy Ghost**, may be connected with "giving commands," in which case the meaning would be that our Lord's commands were divine in origin and character; or with "had chosen," which would signify that the election of the Apostles was by the Holy Ghost. The first seems to be the more correct meaning, since our Lord, in His human nature and actions, was usually described as moved by the Holy Ghost. Cf. Matt. xii. 18; Luke iii. 22; iv. 1, 14, 18.

3. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of the kingdom of God.

4. And eating together with them, he commanded them, that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but should wait for the promise of the Father, which you have heard (saith he) by my mouth.

**Was taken up;** i.e., by His Father, whose power was identical, indeed, with His own, as God. St. Luke is here speaking of Jesus as the Son of Man (Mark xvi. 19).

3. **To whom also he shewed himself,** etc. There are ten recorded appearances of our Lord to His Apostles and disciples after His Resurrection: (a) to Mary Magdalen (Mark xvi. 9); (b) to the other women (Matt. xxviii. 9); (c) to St. Peter (Luke xxiv. 34); (d) to the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 15); (e) to all the Apostles, except St. Thomas, on Easter evening (Luke xxiv. 36; John xx. 19, 24 ff.); (f) to all the Apostles on Low Sunday evening (John xx. 26); (g) to five hundred disciples in Galilee (1 Cor. xv. 6); (h) to James (1 Cor. xv. 7); (i) to the disciples on the border of the lake (John xxi. 1 ff.; 1 Cor. xv. 7); (j) to St. Paul (1 Cor. xv. 8; Acts ix. 4; xxii. 6-10; xxvi. 12-18).

**Proofs;** i.e., incontestible manifestations and arguments, such as talking and eating with His disciples, allowing His body and wounds to be touched and handled by them, to show the reality of His risen body.

**For forty days,** etc. During this time our Lord appeared frequently, at different intervals; He was not continuously visible. It is only St. Luke who gives us the precise length of time between the Resurrection and Ascension. See on Luke xxiv. 53.

**Speaking of the kingdom of God;** i.e., making known to His disciple His will relative to the things that pertained to the Church, to its sacraments, its doctrine, its government and spread over the world. Many of these things have come down to us by tradition only.

4. **And eating together with them.** The Greek word *συναλιζόμενος*, here rendered "eating together with them," may have this meaning, if it be derived from the root *ἄλς*, *salt*; but if it comes from *ἀλῆς*, *packed together*, the translation, "assembled together," which the moderns prefer, would seem to be more correct. The former interpretation, however, is preferred by the Greek Fathers and by the



5. For John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, not many days hence.

majority of commentators, and seems more perfectly to agree with Mark xvi. 14; Luke xxiv. 43.

**He commanded them**, etc. After the Resurrection the disciples remained in Jerusalem the entire Paschal week, as the Law of Moses required, and celebrated there the octave of the Resurrection (John xx. 26–29). Then, following the Master's advice, they departed for Galilee (Matt. xxviii. 10), where the risen Saviour was to manifest himself,—not privately, as in Judea, to His Apostles and a few friends whose faith He wished to strengthen,—but publicly to all the disciples. Now, however, on the eve of the Ascension, the Saviour bids His Apostles not to depart from Jerusalem, but to await there the coming of the Holy Ghost. This Holy Spirit had been frequently promised by God the Father through the prophets (Jer. xxxi. 33; Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28), and by our Lord Himself (Luke xii. 12; xxi. 15; xxiv. 49; John xiv. 16, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 13).

5. This same distinction between the baptism of John and that of Christ had already been made by the Baptist himself. See Matthew iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16. From this verse, however, we are not to understand that the Apostles were to receive the sacrament of Baptism at Pentecost, which they had already received either from Christ or His disciples (John iii. 26). There is reference here only to the abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit and His gifts which the Apostles should receive some ten days later.

It is disputed just at what time the Sacrament of Baptism was instituted. Most probably, according to St. Thomas, it was when our Lord Himself was baptized in the Jordan (Matt. iii. 16). The future obligation of the Sacrament was announced to Nicodemus (John iii), and its actual necessity was proclaimed by the Saviour after the Resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15). The use, however, of the Sacrament of Baptism began when Christ and His disciples were baptizing (John iii–iv); but it was not of precept until the Old Testament with all its rites had passed away at the death of our Lord on the cross: up to this circumcision sufficed for justification from original sin. Baptism was solemnly promulgated to the whole world on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii. 38, 39).

6. They therefore who were come together, asked him, saying: Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?

7. But he said to them: It is not for you to know the times or moments, which the Father hath put in his own power:

8. But you shall receive the power of the Holy Ghost coming upon you, and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and Samaria, and even to the uttermost part of the earth.

9. And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight.

6. **Lord, wilt thou restore, etc.** From the prophets the disciples had understood not only the promise of the Holy Spirit, but also the conversion of Israel and the restoration of the throne of David (Isa. xi. 12; xiv. 1; xlv. 3; xlix. 8, 22; Ezech. xi. 19; xxxvi. 26; Osee iii. 4, 5). They had hoped that the Messiah would redeem Israel from the yoke of Rome (Luke xxiv. 21), and now at the mention of the coming of the Holy Ghost, they felt sure that the time of their deliverance was at hand. Their thoughts were still earthly; they needed the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

7. Our Lord simply told the disciples that it was not for them to know at what time or under what circumstances the restoration of Israel should take place. The secrets of the last times are known only to the Godhead, and many of the ancient prophecies will have their fulfillment only at the end of the world.

8. **You shall be witnesses unto me, etc.;** i.e., witnesses of His incarnation, life, passion, death, and resurrection, as well as His precepts, doctrine, promises, etc.

**In Jerusalem, etc.** On their first mission (Matt. x. 5) the disciples were forbidden to go to the Samaritans and Gentiles, because the Gospel was first to be offered to the chosen people; but now it was to be preached not only in Jerusalem and Galilee, but in Samaria and in every part of the world. The Gospel and Church of Christ were not to be restricted to the Jews, or to any one people, but are for all peoples and nations, as was foretold by the prophets and our Lord Himself (Isa. ii. 2; xi. 9, 10; lx. 4, 5; Matt. viii. 11; xiii. 32; xxi. 43; xxiv. 14; xxviii. 20).

9. **He was raised up.** See above, on verse 3. It is remarkable that only Mark and Luke speak of the Ascension of our Lord. See on Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

10. And while they were beholding him going up to heaven, behold two men stood by them in white garments.

11. Who also said: Ye men of Galilee, why stand you looking up to heaven? This Jesus who is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, as you have seen him going into heaven.

12. Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount that is called Olivet, which is nigh Jerusalem, within a sabbath day's journey.

13. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Jude the brother of James.

10. **Two men**; i.e., two angels in human form. Their white garments were expressive of joy and happiness.

11. **Ye men of Galilee**, etc. All the Apostles, except Judas, were from Galilee. The angels reminded the Apostles that they had a work to perform, and that they should be about it. To console them, and to impress upon them the great fact of Christ's coming at the end to judge the world, the angels announce that our Lord will come again with the same body which has just disappeared, clothed with power and majesty (Luke xxi. 27).

12. As it is here stated that the disciples returned from Mt. Olivet, it would appear that the Ascension took place from the highest point on Olivet, as tradition has handed down. This would be just a Sabbath day's journey, or a little under *one mile* from Jerusalem. But St. Luke (xxiv. 50, 51) says "he led them out as far as Bethania," etc., and Bethania was at the eastern foot of Mt. Olivet, about *two miles* from Jerusalem. *Answer*: Most likely our Lord went first to Bethania, by the lower circuitous road, and thence ascended the mountain from the east; thus the statement of this verse is not opposed to that of the Third Gospel.

13. **Into an upper room**,—rather "into *the* upper room" (τὸ ὑπερῶν). The definite article shows it was a place well known, whither they were accustomed to resort for prayer or business. Most probably it was the Cenacle where our Lord had instituted the Holy Eucharist.

The list of the Apostles given here by St. Luke is different in order from that in his Gospel. Here he seems to enumerate them according to their greater nearness and familiarity with Jesus. **Jude of James** means Jude the brother of James, so called to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot. See on Matthew x. 1-4.

14. All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

15. In those days Peter rising up in the midst of the brethren said: (now the number of persons together was about an hundred and twenty:)

16. Men, brethren, the scripture must needs be fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who was the leader of them that apprehended Jesus:

17. Who was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry.

18. And he indeed hath possessed a field of the reward of iniquity, and being hanged, burst asunder in the midst: and all his bowels gushed out.

14. **Persevering . . . in prayer**; i.e., they were most attentive to prayer in the Upper Room, and at the accustomed services seven times a day in the Temple. **With the women, etc.** These were the pious women from Galilee who had ministered to our Lord during His Passion and after His burial, among whom were Mary Magdalen, Salome, Mary of Cleophas, and others. It was only natural that the Blessed Virgin should have taken a special part in an occasion of such great importance as the present one. **His brethren**, i.e., His relatives. Hebrew was a poor language with but few expressions for a variety of ideas. Hence the term "brethren" was used to express *cousins*, and relatives in general. In this way James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem, was called "the brother of the Lord," although he was only the cousin of our Saviour, his mother being the sister of the Blessed Virgin and his father Cleophas or Alpheus. St. Jerome (*contra Helvid.* 4) says: "*Quatuor modis in Scripturis fratres dicuntur: natura, gente, cognatione, affectu.*"

15. **In those days**; i.e., between the Ascension and Pentecost, while they were persevering in prayer, **Peter rising up**, thus assuming his position as chief of the Apostles. Cf. Matthew xvi. 16-19; Luke xxii. 31, 32; John xxi. 15-17.

16. **The scripture**, which is quoted in verses 19, 20.

17. **Who was numbered, etc.**; i.e., who was among the Apostles chosen by our Lord, and to whom had been allotted (κληρος;) a place in the ministerial work which Christ had freely given them.

18. **Hath possessed a field, etc.**, — rather, "hath acquired a field," etc. We know from St. Matthew (xxvii. 7) that the priests bought the field with the thirty pieces of silver given to Judas; hence indirectly the field was the purchase of Judas, and "the reward of iniquity."

19. And it became known to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the same field was called in their tongue, Haceldama, that is to say, The field of blood.

20. For it is written in the book of Psalms: Let their habitation become desolate, and let there be none to dwell therein. And his bishopric let another take.

21. Wherefore of these men who have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus came in and went out among us,

22. Beginning from the baptism of John, until the day wherein he was taken up from us, one of these must be made a witness with us of his resurrection.

**Being hanged, etc.** The Greek has, "falling on his face," *πρηνής γενόμενος*; the Old Itala has, "being thrown upon his face," *dijectus in faciem*. His bowels gushed out. We know from St. Matthew (xxvii. 5) that he hanged himself with a halter, most probably from the bough of a tree. Either the halter or the bough broke, casting him on his face with the result here described.

19. **In their tongue**; i.e., in the Aramaic, spoken by the Jews. St. Luke explains to his Gentile readers the meaning of the Aramaic term, *Haceldama*, or *Aeldama*.

20. **It is written, etc.**; i.e., in Psalms lxviii. 26 and cviii. 8. Most of the Greek MSS., the Itala and the Syriac versions, as well as some of the Fathers, have "*his habitation*," instead of "*their habitation*." This would make clearer the application to Judas. The Psalms, of course, refer directly to the punishments in store for the enemies of the Psalmist, and only indirectly to the treason and punishment of Judas.

**His bishopric**; i.e., his office of an Apostle. Literally the word *ἐπίσκοπος* means an "inspector," an "overseer."

21, 22. **Of these men, etc.** St. Peter understood from the prophecy cited that it was necessary to choose another to fill the place of Judas. The qualifications for such an office were that the candidate should have been familiar with the whole public life of our Lord. The men referred to were perhaps the seventy-two, spoken of in Luke x. 1.

**Of his resurrection.** It was necessary that the Apostles should be witnesses, not alone of the public life of our Lord, but in a special manner of His Resurrection. This latter miracle was the greatest argument for our Lord's divinity, and the one to which He Himself

23. And they appointed two, Joseph, called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias.

24. And praying, they said: Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen,

25. To take the place of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas hath by transgression fallen, that he might go to his own place.

26. And they gave them lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.

made particular appeal. See 1 Cor. xv. 12-22; Acts iii. 15; x. 40; Matt. xii. 39, 40; John ii. 19. Thus from the first days of the Apostolic preaching down to the present day the Resurrection of Christ has been the great argument in favor of the divinity and truth of the Christian Revelation. The Resurrection is a manifest proof of the Divinity of Jesus, of the divine authority of His teachings, and of the Church which He established. Likewise the miracles performed by the Apostles and first disciples according to the prediction of Christ, and in confirmation of their preaching, were most convincing proofs of the truth of the doctrines they taught.

**23. They appointed two;** i.e., those present took part with the Apostles in selecting the two to be voted on. In the early Church the faithful were thus often consulted in selecting Bishops, but the appointment, as in the present instance (verse 24) was always from God. **Barsabas** means the son of Sabas. **Matthias** is the same name as Matthew, which means "gift of God." As it was necessary that these candidates should be familiar with the public life of Jesus, the opinion of Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* i. 12) seems probable, which says that the two here mentioned were the Joseph and Matthias of the seventy-two disciples.

**24. The disciples knew that it belonged to Christ to appoint His Apostles;** they also knew that He had already made His choice, and now they prayed that He should manifest it.

**25. That he might go, etc.;** i.e., to the abode of the damned, the place of punishment, which his sin and unrepentance deserved.

**26. They gave them lots;** i.e., they gave their lots. This was done probably by writing the names of the two on small tablets to be cast into an urn, the first drawn of which would be regarded as God's choice. This method of ascertaining God's will in important matters was often used in the Old Testament (Lev. xvi. 8, 9; Num. xxvi. 55; Josue vii. 14; 1 Kings x. 20; 1 Parl. xxv. 8).

## CHAPTER II

THE COMING OF THE HOLY GHOST, 1-4.

ALL JERUSALEM MARVELS AT THE MIRACLE, 5-13.

THE FIRST DISCOURSE OF PETER TO THE PEOPLE, 14-36.

THE CONVERSION OF THREE THOUSAND SOULS, 37-41.

THE HOLY LIFE OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS, 42-47.

1. And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place:

2. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire, and it sat upon every one of them:

1. **The days of the Pentecost.** The word **days** is singular in the Greek. Taken in the plural, as in the Vulgate, it means the period of fifty days from the Pasch to Pentecost; in the singular it signifies the fiftieth day after the Pasch, or the day of Pentecost itself. **Pentecost** means **fiftieth** (day). It was one of the three great feasts which all males among the Jews were obliged to celebrate in Jerusalem. It lasted but one day, on which they offered to God bread made from the grain of the new harvest and some sacrifices. Cf. Exod. xxiii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 15; Num. xxxiii. 26; Deut. xvi. 9.

**In one place;** i.e., in the Cenacle, where they were gathered together (i. 13).

2, 3. **A mighty wind.** Our Lord had compared the action of the Holy Ghost to a wind (John iii. 8), and in the Old Testament wind often symbolized the presence of God (2 Kings v. 24; 3 Kings xix. 11). At our Lord's baptism the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of a dove; at the Transfiguration, in the form of a bright cloud; and here, as a fire, to purify, warm, and enlighten the Apostles. The Apostles were moved, therefore, not only by the sound, but also by the appearance, under the form of fire, of God's Holy Spirit; and this fire had the semblance of tongues, like a candle flame, which settled down on each one of them. The tongues appeared **parted**, perhaps because each tongue had the appearance

4. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with divers tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.

5. Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

of being split as it rested on the head of the Apostles; or because, while the fire was whole in itself, it separated into different shafts or rays of light, as it rested on each of the Apostles.

4. **They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.** This signifies the abundance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit which the Apostles received. Among these gifts was that of tongues, which enabled the Apostles at the time to speak all languages, and which signified that the Gospel was to be preached in the whole world. The Apostles, however, did not possess this power of speaking different languages as a permanent gift.

**Diverse tongues;** i.e., other, or different languages from their own, as appears from the Greek. **As the Holy Ghost gave them,** etc. This shows that the power to speak these strange languages, of which they were before ignorant, was a gift of the Holy Ghost, and not a personal acquisition. The gift of tongues had already been promised the Apostles by our Lord (Mark xvi. 17), and was not infrequently possessed in the early Church (x. 46; xix. 6; 1 Cor. xiv).

Some authorities, e.g., Dionysius the Carthusian, Cornelius à Lapide, and Estius, believe that the miracle of the gift of tongues was rather in the hearing of the listeners than in the speech of the Apostles, that the latter spoke their native languages, but were variously understood by those who heard them. But this opinion seems out of harmony with the account of St. Luke here given, and with the promise of Christ in Mark xvi. 17.

5. The Jews here spoken of were of the Dispersion, not natives of Palestine. They were religious and devout, and had come to Jerusalem to take part in the religious festival of Pentecost. It is no exaggeration to say they were men from **every nation under heaven**, for the Jews were in truth scattered throughout the then known world. Of this we are assured also by such authors as Josephus, Philo, and Strabo; and indeed it is not at all surprising when we remember the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities together with the many persecutions the Jews endured.



6. And when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded in mind, because that every man heard them speak in his own tongue.

7. And they were all amazed, and wondered, saying: Behold, are not all these that speak, Galileans?

8. And how have we heard, every man our own tongue wherein we were born?

9. Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Judea, and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

10. Phrygia, and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome,

11. Jews also, and proselytes, Cretes, and Arabians: we have heard them speak in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.

12. And they were all astonished, and wondered, saying one to another: What meaneth this?

6. **When this was noised abroad.** Some understand this phrase to refer to the rushing wind which was heard, not only in the Cenacle, but throughout the city; others think it refers to the news of the miracle of the gift of tongues.

**In his own tongue,**—rather, “in his own peculiar dialect” (*τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ*). The disciples were, therefore, able to speak the different dialects of the nations then represented in Jerusalem, namely, of the Greeks, Persians, Egyptians, etc.

8. **How have we heard?** The Greek has the present tense, “how do we hear?”

9-12. St. Luke enumerates fifteen different regions from which the dwellers or visitors then in Jerusalem had come; they were all witnesses of the miracle of Pentecost. The enumeration begins with the **Parthians**, from the Far East, who lived in what is now Afghanistan, Beloochistan, Chorasán, and Turkistan. The **Medes** were inhabitants of Media, bounded on the north by the Caspian Sea, on the south by Persia, on the east by Parthia, and on the west by Syria and Armenia. The **Elamites** occupied a territory south of the Medes and near the Persian Gulf. The Parthians, the Medes, and the Elamites spoke a dialect of the Persian language. **Mesopotamia** was the country lying between the Tigris on the east and the Euphrates on the west. The inhabitants of Mesopotamia spoke an Aramaic dialect. **Cappadocia** was a Roman province of eastern Asia Minor. **Pontus** was north of Cappadocia. **Asia** was a Roman province comprising a great part of western Asia Minor. **Phrygia** and **Pamphylia** were two central provinces of Asia Minor. Dif-

13. But others mocking, said: These men are full of new wine.

ferent Greek dialects were the languages of Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia. **Egypt**, i.e., lower Egypt, especially around Alexandria, where the Jews were very numerous. **Libya**, the present Tripoli west of Egypt. **Cyrene** was the principal city of Libya, where there were many Jews. The Greeks had brought their language into Egypt, but the people there doubtless continued to speak their Egyptian tongue as well as Greek. **Strangers of Rome** were Jews who lived in Rome, but were then visitors in Jerusalem. They spoke Greek and Latin. These Romans were either Jews by birth, or proselytes, i.e., converts to Judaism. The **Cretes** were inhabitants of the island of Crete; they spoke a Greek dialect.

**We have heard**, etc. (verse 11). The Greek has the present tense, "we hear."

It seems beyond doubt that the gift of tongues, received by the Apostles on the day of Pentecost, was the same as that often spoken of in different places in the New Testament (Acts x. 46; xix. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10; xiv. 2, 5, 6, 13, 22, 29); the same words (*λαλεῖν γλώσσαις*) are used in each instance. Moreover, St. Peter (Acts xi. 15) expressly says that there was given to Cornelius and his family the same gift of tongues which the Apostles had received.

The purpose of the gift of tongues is disputed. Some interpreters hold that it was for the sake of preaching, to enable the Apostles to preach the Gospel in every language and to every people. The majority, however, of commentators and all modern exegetes maintain that the gift was simply ordained to the praise and glory of God. This latter opinion seems the more probable for the following reasons: (a) St. Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 2) expressly says that he who has the gift of tongues possesses it, not for the sake of speaking to men, but in order to speak to God, and that he ought not to use it in church unless there be present an interpreter; (b) the gift of tongues was communicated first in the Cenacle, and to others besides the Apostles who were not to be preachers of the Gospel; (c) we know from the Fathers that St. Mark was the interpreter of St. Peter and that consequently Peter could not speak the language of his hearers in Rome; (d) the incorrect way in which some

14. But Peter standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and spoke to them: Ye men of Judea, and all you that dwell in Jerusalem, be this known to you, and with your ears receive my words.

15. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day:

16. But this is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel:

17. And it shall come to pass, in the last days, (saith the Lord,) I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams.

of the Apostles used the Greek language shows clearly that their knowledge of it was not infused, but rather acquired by practice.

14. **Peter standing up**, etc. Here, as in the Gospels, Peter is represented as the chief of the Apostles and head of the Church. What a change has come over him who before was so timid and weak! Now filled with the spirit of God, and with the gift of tongues on his lips, he fearlessly proclaims to all the miracle of Christ's Resurrection.

15. **The third hour**, which corresponded to our 9 A.M. It was the hour for public prayer, and the pious Israelites, when assisting at great festivals, were not accustomed to break their fast before this hour of official prayer.

16, 17. St. Peter begins his discourse by citing the prophecy of Joel (ii. 28-32), which foretold that in the **last days**, i.e., in the time of the Messiah, all flesh, Jews and Gentiles, young and old, should participate in the abundant gifts of the Holy Ghost. Hence the strange tongues which the people were now hearing were not the result of intoxication, as they wrongly thought, but a sign that the prophecy of Joel was fulfilled, and that, consequently, the reign of the Messiah was at hand.

In the original of Joel we read "after this," instead of "in the last days." The phrase is one used by the ancient prophets to signify the Messianic age, or age of the Christian dispensation, which is, in reality, the last period of the world.

**Shall prophesy**; i.e., shall make known hidden and future things. **Shall see visions**; i.e., images and representations made by God, sometimes only to the mind, sometimes visible to the bodily sight also. These prophecies have been verified throughout the history of the Church, not only in Apostolic times, but in every later period, as is evident from the lives of the saints and Church history. If

18. And upon my servants indeed, and upon my handmaids will I pour out in those days of my spirit, and they shall prophesy.

19. And I will shew wonders in the heaven above, and signs on the earth beneath: blood and fire, and vapour of smoke.

20. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and manifest day of the Lord come.

21. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved.

22. Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him, in the midst of you, as you also know:

23. This same being delivered up, by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you by the hands of wicked men have crucified and slain.

24. Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the sorrows of hell, as it was impossible that he should be holden by it.

dreams or visions are the mediums of divine communication and revelations, God in some way will always make this certain. God's communications are not haphazard; they are always too momentous in themselves to be left mistakable.

18. **My servants . . . my handmaids.** The word "my" in both places is wanting in the Hebrew. The sense is that no servant, male or female, shall be excluded from participation in the gifts of the Holy Ghost. This did not mean that every Christian should enjoy the gift of prophecy, but only that no class of individuals should be excluded from a part in these gifts of the Spirit.

19, 20. These two verses tell what will take place toward the end of the world. The prophet's vision embraces at once the whole period of the Messianic kingdom, from the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost till the Last Judgment.

**Wonders in the heaven above . . . blood . . . fire . . . , etc.** See on Matthew xxiv. 29.

21. **Whosoever shall call, etc. ; i.e., whosoever shall believe in God (Jehovah) and in Christ, and obey God's law shall be saved.**

22, 24. The discourse of Peter was artfully arranged, so as to carry its point and win the assent of his hearers. He did not at first assert the divinity and Messiahship of Jesus, lest this should antagonize the Jews, but began by appealing to the ancient prophecy which foretold the present wonderful happenings, and was a sign of the inauguration of the Messianic reign. Now he proceeds to call attention to "Jesus of Nazareth" as a man sent by God and approved of by God through many miracles wrought publicly in

25. For David saith concerning him: I foresaw the Lord before my face: because he is at my right hand, that I may not be moved.

26. For this my heart hath been glad, and my tongue hath rejoiced: moreover my flesh also shall rest in hope.

27. Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.

28. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance.

29. Ye men, brethren, let me freely speak to you of the patriarch David; that he died, and was buried; and his sepulchre is with us to this present day.

30. Whereas therefore he was a prophet, and knew that God hath sworn to him with an oath, that of the fruit of his loins one should sit upon his throne.

31. Foreseeing this, he spoke of the resurrection of Christ. For neither was he left in hell, neither did his flesh see corruption.

32. This Jesus hath God raised again, whereof all we are witnesses.

the presence of those who were now listening. And the death of this same Jesus, he goes on to say (verse 23), was foreseen and decreed by God from all eternity as a means for man's salvation (John iii. 16; xiv. 31; xviii. 11). But God's foreknowledge and decree of the Passion and death of Jesus did not in any way excuse or palliate the wickedness of the Jews, who, as St. Peter here affirms, were really responsible for these crimes, and used the Romans as mere agents of their malevolence.

In the following verse (24) St. Peter observes that God did not suffer Jesus to remain in the tomb, but raised Him up, as the Psalmist (xvii. 5) had long before announced.

Having loosed the sorrows of hell. The word for "sorrows" in the Hebrew of the Psalm is *cords, bonds*; and the Greek MSS. have *death* instead of "hell." Hell or "death" means here the *grave*, the abode of the dead (Heb., *sheol*).

25-28. David in the Psalm xv. 8-10 introduces the Messiah as speaking to God, who is always before him, as Protector, who will give "hope" of resurrection to His "flesh" in the grave, and who will "not leave His soul in sheol," nor permit His body "to see the corruption of the grave," but will restore Him again to "the ways of life" through the Resurrection, and fill Him in heaven "with the joy of His presence."

29-32. St. Peter calls attention to the fact that the words of the Psalmist could not apply to David himself, since he was dead, and his grave in the Holy City was known, but that, having received from God a promise that he should have a successor, the Messiah, in

33. Being exalted therefore by the right hand of God, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath poured forth this which you see and hear.

34. For David ascended not into heaven; but he himself said: The Lord said to my Lord, sit thou on my right hand,

35. Until I make thy enemies thy footstool.

36. Therefore let all the house of Israel know most certainly, that God hath made both Lord and Christ, this same Jesus, whom you have crucified.

37. Now when they had heard these things, they had compunction in their heart, and said to Peter, and to the rest of the apostles: What shall we do, men and brethren?

38. But Peter said to them: Do penance, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins: and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

39. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are far off, whomsoever the Lord our God shall call.

whom these predictions should be verified, and being himself a prophet, he foresaw in prophecy the Resurrection of Christ, the Messiah, of which St. Peter and all were witnesses.

33. Peter now gives the real explanation of the miracle of the gift of tongues: This Jesus, this Christ of whom he had been speaking and of whom David prophesied, has been raised by God to the throne of the Divinity, and has just now sent the Holy Spirit on the disciples, as He had promised before being assumed into heaven (John xv. 26; xvi. 7).

34-36. Having proved the Resurrection from Psalm xv, St. Peter now proves the Ascension from Psalm cix. As in the former case, so now, the words of the Psalmist were not verified in the person of David, and hence they must refer to Christ. This the Jewish Doctors did not deny.

The **right hand** means the place of power and honor, and indicates the place of our Lord's humanity in heaven, which is above all creatures, next to God Himself. These words prove the divinity of Christ, because none other than a Divine Person could be said to send the Holy Ghost from the Father. St. Peter, therefore, first showed that Jesus was sent and approved by God; next that He was the promised Messiah; and finally that He was God Himself. His conclusion, then, is that "all the house of Israel" should know that God has made Jesus Christ the Lord and Master of all things in the world.

37-39. Moved by the sermon of St. Peter, the Jews conceived a

40. And with very many other words did he testify and exhort them, saying: Save yourselves from this perverse generation.

41. They therefore that received his word, were baptized; and there were added in that day about three thousand souls.

real sorrow for their sins in putting Christ to death and rejecting the promised Messiah. They earnestly asked what they should do to be forgiven. Peter replied that they should first repent, **do penance** and then **be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ**, i.e., make external profession of their faith in the person and religion of Christ. Faith in God, in the Holy Trinity, and in our Lord are necessary for salvation. See on John xvii. 3.

Some theologians have thought that in the early ages the sacrament of Baptism was sometimes administered by invoking the name of Jesus Christ only, but this is against the common teaching and tradition of the Church. The correct form of the sacrament is only that given in Matthew xxviii. 19. St. Peter was not here giving the formula of Baptism, but merely describing the effects of the sacrament.

**You shall receive the gift**, etc. The effect of Baptism is to give sanctifying grace to the soul, which makes the soul the temple and dwelling place of the Holy Ghost and His gifts. The promise of the Holy Spirit is to all, both near and far, Jews and Gentiles, who are disposed to receive Him. Some understand this giving of the Holy Ghost to have been the sacrament of Confirmation which, in the early Church, was given with Baptism, or soon after it; but this is hardly probable.

40. St. Luke gives only a part of St. Peter's discourse, in which he gave testimony regarding the life, miracles, death, and Resurrection of our Lord. **This perverse generation** refers to the unbelieving and unrepenting Jews who would not believe and be baptized.

41. **Were baptized.** St. Luke does not say by whom they were baptized, whether by St. Peter or the other Apostles; nor does he indicate the method or rite which was followed. More probably the Baptism was not administered by immersion, because water for so many was not plentiful in Jerusalem, and because there was hardly sufficient time to baptize so many by immersion in one day. We know, moreover, that Baptism was administered by infusion at a very early date (Didache, c. vii).

42. And they were persevering in the doctrine of the apostles, and in the communication of the breaking of bread, and in prayers.

43. And fear came upon every soul: many wonders also and signs were done by the apostles in Jerusalem, and there was great fear in all.

44. And all they that believed, were together, and had all things common.

45. Their possessions and goods they sold, and divided them to all, according as every one had need.

46. And continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they took their meat with gladness and simplicity of heart;

47. Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord increased daily together such as should be saved.

Calmet thinks the baptism of the three thousand souls did not take place on the day of Pentecost, but some days later. The reason given is that the Jews were too scrupulous observers of the legal repose to permit anything like the baptism of so many persons on the feast of Pentecost. This opinion seems opposed to the text.

42-47. St. Luke in these verses describes the life and practices of the first Christians. According to the Vulgate their occupations were threefold: (a) attendance at doctrine; (b) participation in the breaking of bread; (c) assistance at prayer. But from the Greek MSS. we gather more than this, and find that their religious practices were: (a) to assist regularly at the instructions given by the Apostles on the life and teachings of Jesus; (b) to take part in works of fraternal charity for the community of Christians, who were already living together, separate from the Jews; (c) to assist at the "celebration of the Eucharist" (as it is called in the Syriac version) and receive Holy Communion (which was called "*the breaking*," i.e., *the eating* "of bread"); (d) to assist at "prayers," which were most likely recited in public at fixed hours.

**In the temple.** Although the ancient rites were now displaced and superseded by those of the new dispensation, the former were discontinued only gradually. "Breaking bread" in verse 46, without the article, unlike the similar phrase in verse 42, probably does not refer to the Eucharist, but only to their ordinary meals which the faithful took together. Still it is very likely that after their simple supper, the Christians partook also of Holy Communion, following the order observed by our Lord in instituting the Eucharist. See on Matthew xxvi. 26-28; Mark xiv. 22-24; Luke xxii. 19-23.



## CHAPTER III

PETER HEALS THE LAME MAN, I-II.

PETER'S DISCOURSE TO THOSE WHO WITNESSED THIS  
MIRACLE, 12-26.

1. Now Peter and John went up into the temple at the ninth hour of prayer.
2. And a certain man who was lame from his mother's womb, was carried: whom they laid every day at the gate of the temple, which is called Beautiful, that he might ask alms of them that went into the temple.
3. He, when he had seen Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms.
4. But Peter with John fastening his eyes upon him, said: Look upon us.
5. But he looked earnestly upon them, hoping that he should receive something of them.

1. **The ninth hour**, which was about 3 P.M., the hour for the evening sacrifice, when a lamb was immolated in the Temple (Exod. xxix. 38; Num. xxviii. 3). The Israelites assisted in prayer at this sacrifice. The fixed hours for public prayer among the Jews were the *third* (9 A.M.), the *sixth* (12 M.), and the *ninth* (3 P.M.).

2. **Lame from his mother's womb.** The man was "above forty years old" (iv. 22), hence the miracle was very remarkable. **The gate . . . beautiful.** This was probably one of the gates in the wall which surrounded the Temple enclosure, perhaps on the east, leading from the Mount of Olives. Some think it was the gate leading into the Court of the Women, the outermost court of the Temple. No such gate as "Beautiful" is mentioned by Josephus or other Jewish authors.

4. Peter wished the man to fix his eyes upon the source of the miracle about to be performed in order that he might clearly understand whence came the power that wrought it, and thus be moved to believe in the divine mission of the Apostles. The miracle, however, was intended more for others than for the man himself,

6. But Peter said: Silver and gold I have none; but what I have, I give as many as were of the kindred of the high priest.

7. And taking him by the right hand, he lifted him up, and forthwith his feet and soles received strength.

8. And he leaping up, stood, and walked, and went in with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God.

9. And all the people saw him walking and praising God.

10. And they knew him, that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened to him.

11. And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran to them to the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly wondering.

12. But Peter seeing, made answer to the people: Ye men of Israel, why wonder you at this? or why look you upon us, as if by our strength or power we had made this man to walk?

13. The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the God of our fathers, hath glorified his Son Jesus, whom you indeed delivered up and denied before the face of Pilate, when he judged he should be released.

14. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you.

15. But the author of life you killed, whom God hath raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses.

**6. I have none.** The Apostles were leading a life of evangelical poverty in common, and so had no money to give; but in the name, i.e., in the power and authority of Jesus Christ, they could perform miracles, such as this present one.

**11. As he held Peter and John;** i.e., clung to their hands or garments, out of gratitude for his cure, and fearing perhaps a return of the malady should he let them depart. "Solomon's porch" was a colonnade, or covered passage, on the eastern side of the Temple enclosure. Here the people were gathered who had witnessed the miracle.

**12, 13. Made answer** is a Hebraism for, "began to speak." In this discourse Peter at first makes it clear to the people that the Apostles were nothing more than instruments in the hands of God, that God was the real author of this miracle, and that by working the prodigy the God of their fathers had glorified His Son Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified. In the present discourse Peter speaks more freely, upbraids the Jews more bitterly, and manifests the nature and office of Christ, the Messiah and Son of God, more clearly than he thought it prudent to do in his first discourse.

**15. The author of life;** i.e., the principle and cause of all life,

16. And in the faith of his name, this man, whom you have seen and known, hath his name strengthened; and the faith which is by him, hath given this perfect soundness in the sight of you all.

17. And now, brethren, I know that you did it through ignorance, as did also your rulers.

18. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.

19. Be penitent, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.

20. That when the times of refreshment shall come from the presence of the Lord, and he shall send him who hath been preached unto you, Jesus Christ,

21. Whom heaven indeed must receive, until the times of the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of his holy prophets, from the beginning of the world.

natural and supernatural. **God hath raised**, etc. The Apostles always appealed to the Resurrection as the great argument for Christ's divinity.

16. It was the power resident in the name of Christ, combined with faith in that power on the part of those who were the instruments of the miracle, which cured the lame man. Christ was the principal cause of the miracle, but the faith of Peter, if not also of the sick man, was the necessary condition of the cure.

17, 18. After severe reproof of them Peter tries to excuse the Jews, and even their rulers, for the crime they had committed in putting Christ to death. Our Lord Himself had said, "they know not what they do" (Luke xxiii. 34). But Peter goes on to observe that in their wickedness and ignorance, when they thought Jesus was powerless, they were but fulfilling the prophecy of Isaias (liii) which foretold the sufferings of the Messiah.

20, 21. **That when**,—rather, "in order that" or "so that" (*ὅπως ἄν*). The phrase must be understood in connection with the preceding verse. The meaning, therefore, here is that those who had been guilty of a part in putting to death the Messiah, the Son of God, should repent and do penance, so that **the times of refreshment**, i.e., of reward at Christ's second coming, might be hastened. Peter here seems to say that if the Jews would repent and turn to God, the end of the world would soon follow, and the Elect would enter into rest. The conversion of the Jewish people to God is, indeed, one of the signs which shall precede the second coming of Christ; but before this the Gospel also must be preached

22. For Moses said: A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me: him you shall hear according to all things whatsoever he shall speak to you.

23. And it shall be, that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.

24. And all the prophets, from Samuel and afterwards, who have spoken, have told of these days.

25. You are the children of the prophets, and of the testament which God made to our fathers, saying to Abraham: And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.

26. To you first God, raising up his Son, hath sent him to bless you; that every one may convert himself from his wickedness.

in the whole world, and the number of the Elect must be filled (Matt. xxiv. 14, 22; Rom. xi. 26; Apoc. vi. 10, 11).

22, 23. After referring to the blessings that shall follow conversion and penance, Peter now goes on to point out the punishment of those who, ignoring the prophecy of Moses (Deut. xviii. 15 ff.), do not recognize Jesus as Messiah and Saviour. The Jews of our Lord's time generally understood this prophecy to refer to the Messiah (John i. 21, 45; v. 46).

24. All the prophets from Samuel, etc. Samuel was the head of the school of the prophets (1 Kings xix. 20), and the first great prophet after Moses. All the prophets, in one way or another, had foretold "these days" of the Messianic reign. But as no Messianic prophecy is attributed to Samuel, the reference in his case must be to 2 Kings vii. 12-16; in Hebrew the two first books of Kings are called Books of Samuel.

25. Children of the prophets, etc.; i.e., those for whom the oracles of the prophets were in a special manner destined, and to whom the covenant of God with the patriarchs especially appertained (Gen. xxii. 18; Ps. lxxi. 17).

## CHAPTER IV

PETER AND JOHN ARE TAKEN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM, 1-7.

PETER'S DISCOURSE BEFORE THE JEWISH RULERS, 8-12.

THE TWO APOSTLES ARE SET FREE, 13-22.

THE PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL AFTER THE RELEASE OF THE TWO APOSTLES, 23-31.

THE FRATERNAL UNITY OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS, 32-37.

1. And as they were speaking to the people, the priests, and the officer of the temple, and the Sadducees, came upon them,

2. Being grieved that they taught the people, and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead:

3. And they laid hands upon them, and put them in hold till the next day; for it was now evening.

1. **The officer of the temple**, who was a priest entrusted with maintaining public order in the Temple.

**Sadducees.** These were especially opposed to the doctrines of the Pharisees, rejecting all traditions and admitting only the written law. They denied the resurrection, the future life, and the existence of spirits or angels. Being very rich, and favored with high offices by the Romans, they were powerful, although few in number.

The Pharisees, on the contrary, were the scrupulous observers of the Law of Moses, and of a multitude of their own traditions besides. They believed in the future life, in the resurrection, the existence of spirits, etc. In the time of our Lord, however, their religion and observance were wholly external and affected; their prevailing characteristics were hypocrisy and pride. And yet, because of their feigned observance and piety they enjoyed great influence with the people.

2. **Being grieved, etc.**, because they considered that they alone were the ones who had a right to teach; and if others taught, it should be only with their permission, which permission the Apostles did not have.

4. But many of them who had heard the word, believed; and the number of the men was made five thousand.

5. And it came to pass on the morrow, that their princes, and ancients, and scribes, were gathered together in Jerusalem;

6. And Annas the high priest, and Caiphas, and John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the kindred of the high priest.

7. And setting them in the midst, they asked: By what power, or by what name, have you done this?

8. Then Peter, filled with the Holy Ghost, said to them: Ye princes of the people, and ancients, hear:

9. If we this day are examined concerning the good deed done to the infirm man, by what means he hath been made whole:

10. Be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God hath raised from the dead, even by him this man standeth here before you whole.

4. **Five thousand**; i.e., the whole number of the faithful was now five thousand, whereas a short time before it was only three thousand. This is the interpretation given to the phrase "five thousand" by nearly all exegetes.

5. **The princes, and ancients, etc.**; i.e., the Sanhedrim. The Supreme Council, or Sanhedrim, was made up of the chief priests, i.e., the heads of the twenty-four sacerdotal families, the principal Scribes, and the elders of the people. The first represented the religious authority among the Jews; the second class were authorities in the Law of Moses and its application to practical affairs; the ancients or elders of the people represented the civil power.

6. **Annas the high priest.** Annas was really no longer High Priest, having been deposed in A.D. 14; but he retained the title. Caiphas, his son-in-law, was at this time holding the office, but Annas, who was very powerful with the people, perhaps took a leading part in the administration of affairs.

7. **Have you done this?** i.e., how have you wrought the cure of the infirm man?

8-10. Peter, who but a short time before was so fearful, now boldly tells the rulers of Israel that, if they wish to know in whose name and by what power the Apostles have cured the cripple, it is in the name and by the power and authority of Jesus of Nazareth whom they had crucified, but whom God had raised from the dead. Again he reminds them of their crime, and of the Resurrection.

11. This is the stone which was rejected by you the builders, which is become the head of the corner.

12. Neither is there salvation in any other. For there is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved.

13. Now seeing the constancy of Peter and of John, understanding that they were illiterate and ignorant men, they wondered; and they knew them that they had been with Jesus.

14. Seeing the man also who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it.

15. But they commanded them to go aside out of the council; and they conferred among themselves,

16. Saying: What shall we do to these men? for indeed a known miracle hath been done by them, to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem: it is manifest, and we cannot deny it.

17. But that it may be no farther spread among the people, let us threaten them that they speak no more in this name to any man.

18. And calling them, they charged them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

19. But Peter and John answering, said to them: If it be just in the sight of God, to hear you rather than God, judge ye.

20. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

21. But they threatening, sent them away, not finding how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified what had been done, in that which had come to pass.

22. For the man was above forty years old, in whom that miraculous cure had been wrought.

11. **This is the stone**, etc. The Jewish rulers and leaders, who had been the builders of the Synagogue, were also called to be the builders of the spiritual house of God; but they rejected Christ, who was to be the very foundation of that spiritual edifice. And now God has made this rejected Christ the central stone on which He will build His Church. The quotation is from Psalm cxvii. 22, which our Lord also had applied to Himself (Matt. xxi. 42).

12. **No other name**, etc.; i.e., no one can be saved eternally except through the merits and power of Christ. **Name** here means the person and power of Jesus. Cf. Philip. ii. 10.

13. **Illiterate**, i.e., unlettered (*ἀγράμματοι*), not having attended the school of the Rabbis. **And ignorant**; i.e., without any culture or refinement, or public authority to teach. **They knew them**; i.e., they began to recognize them (*ἐπεγίνωσκον*).

19, 20. There was a conflict between the authority of God and that of men, and it was clear which should prevail. Even the Jews could not deny that the will of God, so patent, should be obeyed.

21. The rulers feared a tumult among the people should they do

23. And being let go, they came to their own company, and related all that the chief priests and ancients had said to them.

24. Who having heard it, with one accord lifted up their voice to God, and said: Lord, thou art he that didst make heaven and earth, the sea, and all things that are in them.

25. Who, by the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, hast said: Why did the Gentiles rage, and the people meditate vain things?

26. The kings of the earth stood up, and the princes assembled together against the Lord and his Christ.

27. For of a truth there assembled together in this city against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel,

28. To do what thy hand and thy counsel decreed to be done.

29. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy servants, that with all confidence they may speak thy word,

30. By stretching forth thy hand to cures, and signs, and wonders to be done by the name of thy Holy Son Jesus.

anything to the Apostles, so they threatened the latter severely and sent them away. The words, "in that which had come to pass," found also in the Vulgate, are wanting in the Greek; they are tautological and add nothing to the sense.

23. **To their own company**; i.e., to the other Apostles and disciples, who were probably united in prayer.

24. **With one accord lifted up**, etc. It is not easy to understand how they could all at once break forth with the selfsame canticle, if it were spontaneously, then and there, composed. Some think this prayer was an ancient formula used by the Apostles; others, that it was the result of a collective inspiration on the part of all then assembled; still others believe the prayer was composed for the occasion by St. Peter and followed by the rest; others, finally, think this piece of early Christian Psalmody was composed by St. Luke, who in these few words summed up the various sentiments of those who, on this occasion, were speaking their thankful praises to God.

25-30. **By the Holy Ghost**. These words are wanting in many MSS., and are entirely omitted by St. Chrysostom and others. They are considered by nearly all exegetes as a marginal note to the text.

The disciples now understand that the events foretold of the Messiah by David in Psalm ii have come to pass; and they praise God for it, and ask that they may have the confidence and courage necessary to meet and overcome the terrors threatened them (verse 21). They also pray (verse 30) that God would continue



31. And when they had prayed, the place was moved wherein they were assembled; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spoke the word of God with confidence.

32. And the multitude of believers had but one heart and one soul: neither did any one say that aught of the things which he possessed, was his own; but all things were common unto them.

33. And with great power did the apostles give testimony of the resurrection of Jesus Christ our Lord; and great grace was in them all.

34. For neither was there any one needy among them. For as many as were owners of lands or houses, sold them, and brought the price of the things they sold,

35. And laid it down before the feet of the apostles. And distribution was made to every one, according as he had need.

36. And Joseph, who, by the apostles, was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, by interpretation, The son of consolation,) a Levite, a Cyprian born,

37. Having land, sold it, and brought the price, and laid it at the feet of the apostles.

to confirm their preaching by miracles, so that the truth of their doctrine and faith may be proved to all.

31. **The place was moved**, thus manifesting the effect of God's presence, who was there to hear their petitions and grant them strength and protection against their enemies.

32-37. These verses show the great unity of thought, affection, and purpose which reigned among the disciples. Christ had prayed (John xvii. 11) for this beautiful unity among His faithful followers.

All things were possessed in common, as now in religious communities, so that those who had been poor now shared the possessions of the rich. It is not likely, however, that each of the faithful gave up all that he possessed, but only in so far as was necessary to assist his needy brethren. We know, for example, that St. John (John xix. 27) had retained some property, and that the mother of St. Mark, although Christian, possessed a house (xii. 12). Neither was this practice of common poverty either general or permanent in the early Church; the Apostles did not continue it with their Gentile converts.

**Barnabas** (verse 36) in Aramaic *Bar-nebbuah*, signifies "son of prophecy," or "preaching"; and the Greek, *υἱὸς παρακλήσεως*, means "son of exhortation," which gives us to understand that Barnabas possessed a special gift of eloquence in preaching and exhortation. We know, in fact, from Acts xi. 23, 24, that Barnabas was a very powerful preacher, and from St. Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 3)

that this gift of preaching and influencing others pertained to prophecy. Barnabas was a native of Cyprus. His possessions were probably in Cyprus, or in some other pagan country, because a Levite was not permitted to possess any lands or immovable goods in Palestine (Num. xviii. 20, 21 ; Deut. x. 8, 9). But we know from Jer. xxxii. 7 that this law later fell into desuetude, and that Levites did possess property in Palestine.

## CHAPTER V

THE PUNISHMENT OF ANANIAS AND SAPHIRA, 1-11.

MIRACLES AND CONVERSIONS BY THE APOSTLES, 12-16.

THE APOSTLES ARE CAST INTO PRISON, BUT ARE LIBERATED BY AN ANGEL, 17-25.

THE APOSTLES ARE AGAIN ARRESTED AND BROUGHT BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM, 26-33.

GAMALIEL INTERVENES IN THEIR BEHALF, 34-39.

THE APOSTLES ARE SCOURGED AND RELEASED, 40-42.

1. But a certain man named Ananias, with Saphira his wife, sold a piece of land,

2. And by fraud kept back part of the price of the land, his wife being privy thereunto: and bringing a certain part of it, laid it at the feet of the apostles.

3. But Peter said: Ananias, why hath Satan tempted thy heart, that thou shouldst lie to the Holy Ghost, and by fraud keep part of the price of the land?

4. Whilst it remained, did it not remain to thee? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thy heart? Thou hast not lied to men, but to God.

1-4. To understand correctly the incident here related it seems necessary to suppose with some of the Fathers that Ananias, with the knowledge and consent of his wife, had solemnly vowed to God to give all his possessions, or the price of them, to the Apostles for the service of God; and that, while pretending to give all he possessed, he was secretly retaining a part, and thus became guilty of a lie and a sacrilege to God. Ananias' sin, therefore, was directed chiefly against God, and the punishment he received was from God and not from St. Peter. Peter was made aware of his sin by divine revelation. In verse 3 it is said that his lie was to the Holy Ghost, and in verse 4 that he lied to God: in these two affirmations the Fathers find a proof of the divinity of the Holy Spirit.

**Whilst it remained**, etc. This shows that renunciation of property, or the price of it, was entirely voluntary on the part of the early Christians; there was nothing compulsory about it. But if

5. And Ananias hearing these words, fell down, and gave up the ghost. And there came great fear upon all that heard it.

6. And the young men rising up, removed him, and carrying him out, buried him.

7. And it was about the space of three hours after, when his wife, not knowing what had happened, came in.

8. And Peter said to her: Tell me, woman, whether you sold the land for so much? And she said: Yea, for so much.

9. And Peter said unto her: Why have you agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord? Behold the feet of them who had buried thy husband are at the door, and they shall carry thee out.

10. Immediately she fell down before his feet, and gave up the ghost. And the young men coming in, found her dead: and carried her out, and buried her by her husband.

11. And there came great fear upon the whole church, and upon all that heard these things.

anyone, as in the present case, freely chose to give to God all he possessed and pretended to do so, it was a sacrilegious lie to the Holy Ghost not to keep his promise or vow. The laying the money at the feet of the Apostles was considered to be the carrying out of this solemn promise.

5. **Gave up the ghost.** This signal punishment shows how God abhorred the lie and sacrilege of Ananias, and how He wished to rid the early Church of such hateful crimes. Some commentators think that Ananias was given the grace of repentance just before he died.

6. **The young men,** whose duty it likely was to act as ushers at the assemblies of the faithful and to look after the more humble offices of the Church; perhaps the burying of the dead was also a part of their duties. In the East it was customary to bury soon after death.

7. **Three hours.** Saphira probably came to see what had detained her husband so long.

9, 10. **To tempt,** etc.; i.e., to test whether the Holy Ghost had really made known to Peter the sin which she and her husband had committed. They had been partners in the sin, and so should suffer the same chastisement. Peter saw with prophetic vision that Saphira would die the same death as her husband. Some of the Fathers think that she also was spared the punishment of eternal death after so terrible a temporal chastisement.

11. **The whole church;** i.e., the assembly of all the faithful. This

12. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.

13. But of the rest no man durst join himself unto them; but the people magnified them.

14. And the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord, was more increased:

15. Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that when Peter came, his shadow at the least, might overshadow any of them, and they might be delivered from their infirmities.

16. And there came also together to Jerusalem a multitude out of the neighbouring cities, bringing sick persons, and such as were troubled with unclean spirits; who were all healed.

is the first time that St. Luke uses the term "church." Our Lord had, indeed, used it before by anticipation (Matt. xvi. 18; xviii. 17).

12. **By the hands**; i.e., through the ministry and blessings of the Apostles many miracles were performed, as our Lord had promised (John xiv. 12). These miracles served to prove the truth of Christianity and to command the respect of the Jews for the faithful. **All with one accord**; i.e., the Apostles and the faithful were present for the same purpose of public worship.

**Solomon's porch.** See on iii. 11.

13, 14. **The rest**; i.e., the non-Christians who did not wish to become converted. The Christians were a community by themselves, and no one was allowed to join them who had not embraced the faith. The mass of the people, however, loudly praised the Apostles because of their miracles, and many of both sexes joined the Church every day.

15. Commentators think this verse should be immediately connected with verse 12, and that, consequently, verses 13 and 14 should be read parenthetically; this would seem to be the natural order.

**That when Peter came.** Peter is spoken of more than the other Apostles most likely because he was regarded as the chief of the Apostolic group and the Church, and perhaps also because he worked more miracles than the rest.

**Might be delivered**, etc. These words are wanting in many MSS., but they express the sense which would be most naturally understood, namely, the purpose why the people brought out their sick.

16. This verse shows the spread of the faith outside of Jerusalem, on account of the fame of the Apostles' miracles.

17. Then the high priest rising up, and all they that were with him, (which is the heresy of the Sadducees,) were filled with envy.

18. And they laid hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.

19. But an angel of the Lord by night opening the doors of the prison, and leading them out, said,

20. Go, and standing speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.

21. Who having heard this, early in the morning, entered into the temple, and taught. And the high priest coming, and they that were with him, called together the council, and all the ancients of the children of Israel; and they sent to the prison to have them brought.

22. But when the ministers came, and opening the prison, found them not there, they returned and told,

23. Saying: The prison indeed we found shut with all diligence, and the keepers standing before the doors; but opening it, we found no man within.

24. Now when the officer of the temple and the chief priests heard these words, they were in doubt concerning them, what would come to pass.

25. But one came and told them: Behold, the men whom you put in prison, are in the temple standing, and teaching the people.

26. Then went the officer with the ministers, and brought them without violence; for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned.

27. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them,

28. Saying: Commanding we commanded you, that you should not teach in this name; and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and you have a mind to bring the blood of this man upon us.

17. **The high priest**; i.e., Annas (iv. 6), or probably Caiphas, and all who belonged to the heretical body of the Sadducees, rose up, determined to use force against the Apostles.

20. **All the words, etc.**; i.e., all the doctrines and teachings of Jesus Christ which were taught in this new Christian life, and which are the way to supernatural and eternal life.

21. **All the ancients, etc.** These were probably influential leaders among the Jews, who on very important occasions were called to take part in the deliberations of the Sanhedrim.

24. **They were in doubt**; i.e., they were perplexed and embarrassed that this event should have occurred and become known. They knew of the previous miracles of the Apostles, and now they had no reason to doubt that God had again intervened and liberated them from prison.

28. **Commanding we command you.** It is to be noted that the High Priest asked no questions about the Apostles' escape from

29. But Peter and the apostles answering, said: We ought to obey God, rather than men.

30. The God of our fathers hath raised up Jesus, whom you put to death, hanging him upon a tree.

31. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be Prince and Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins.

32. And we are witnesses of these things and the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to all that obey him.

33. When they had heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they thought to put them to death.

prison, lest a knowledge of this new miracle should be emphasized among the people. He only asked why they disobeyed his command not to teach in the name of Jesus, and why they continued to gather around themselves ever increasing adherents. The Sanhedrim feared, indeed, that their crime of putting Christ to death would be laid open to all the people, and that they should be made finally to feel the effects of His blood upon them.

29. **But Peter . . . answering.** Peter, as head of the Church, speaks for all the Apostles, and they give assent to what he says. The will of God has been made clear to them that they should preach, and they must needs obey it. Peter here asserts, only more strongly, what he had said before (iv. 19).

30. **The God of our fathers.** By these words St. Peter wishes to show that Christ is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, and that Christianity is therefore most intimately linked with the Old Law. **Hanging him upon a tree** is an allusion to Deut. xxi. 23.

31. **To be Prince and Saviour.** While the Jews were endeavoring to discredit our Lord, condemning Him to the most ignominious of deaths, God by His infinite power exalted Him to be the King and Saviour of His people. **To give repentance, etc.;** i.e., God has exalted Jesus to His throne in heaven, so that thence He may apply to us the merits of His Passion and death and obtain for us all the grace of repentance and the remission of our sins.

32. **We are witnesses, etc.;** i.e., of the Resurrection, Ascension, and Messiahship of Christ. **And the Holy Ghost** is also a witness of these things, as was shown in the miracles of Pentecost, and in the other miracles which the Apostles performed through His power.

34. But one in the council rising up, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, respected by all the people, commanded the men to be put forth a little while.

35. And he said to them: Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do, as touching these men.

36. For before these days rose up Theodas, affirming himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all that believed him were scattered, and brought to nothing.

34. **Gamaliel**, who had been the instructor of St. Paul, was one of the most learned and illustrious of the Jewish teachers. He was the son of Simeon, who received our Lord into his arms (Luke ii. 25), and the grandson of the famous Hillel. Some of the Fathers have thought that Gamaliel became a Christian, but the Talmud says he died in Judaism. His death occurred about A.D. 57-58. He was respected by all the people for his great learning and fairness and evenness of judgment.

36. **Theodas**. It is very uncertain who this man was. He surely could not have been the one spoken of by Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 5, 1), who instigated an insurrection some twelve years after Gamaliel's speech (A.D. 44). Some interpreters think that St. Luke and Josephus speak of two different persons of the same name. Others believe that Theodas, Thaddeus, and Judas were really the same name differently pronounced, and that the Theodas here spoken of could have been Judas, son of Ezechias, of whom Josephus (*Antiq.* xvii. 10, 5) speaks. Still others think there may be question here of a Judas who caused an insurrection in 4 B.C. (*Antiq.* xvii. 6, 2).

At any rate, we must reject absolutely the opinion of some rationalists who say that St. Luke here made a mistake. Aside from inspiration, St. Luke always shows himself well informed, and he was the intimate companion of St. Paul, who had studied under Gamaliel. If, then, there is a disagreement between St. Luke and Josephus, either they are speaking about different persons, or the error is to be attributed to the latter. As a matter of fact, Josephus is not always correct in his chronology, and is not at all times consistent with himself. Cf. Knabenbauer, *Com. in Act. Ap.*, p. 107; Vigouroux, *Les Livres Saints et la critique rationaliste*, tom. 4, p. 514 ss.; Crelieu, *La Sainte Bible, Les Actes des Apôtres*; Sales, *La Sacra Bibbia*, vol. i.



37. After this man, rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the enrolling, and drew away the people after him: he also perished; and all, even as many as consented to him, were dispersed.

38. And now, therefore, I say to you, refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this council or this work be of men, it will come to nought:

39. But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God. And they consented to him.

40. And calling in the apostles, after they had scourged them, they charged them that they should not speak at all in the name of Jesus; and they dismissed them.

41. And they indeed went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

42. And every day they ceased not in the temple, and from house to house, to teach and preach Christ Jesus.

37. **Judas of Galilee.** Josephus (*Antiq.* xviii. 1, 1; xx. 5, 2) speaks of this Judas as a Gaulonite, from his native place of Gamala, in Gaulonitis; and as a Galilean, from Galilee, the province where he resided, and the principal scene of his revolution. His followers were called Zealots. **In the days of the enrolling**, about A.D. 6. The uprising under Judas was posterior to that of Theodas. With these two instances Gamaliel tried to influence the members of the Sanhedrim not to use violence in dealing with the Apostles, who, as he thought, would finally abandon their crucified leader, as these revolutionaries had abandoned theirs.

40. **Scourged them.** The Sanhedrim had not the power to condemn to death; but they could, by the permission of the Romans, condemn to scourging and to prison.

41, 42. Fortified by the Holy Ghost the Apostles were glad and joyful in their sufferings, thus following the instruction of their Master (Matt. v. 11, 12). And far from being deterred from preaching, they labored and preached all the more zealously.

## CHAPTER VI

THE SEVEN DEACONS ARE APPOINTED, 1-7.

ST. STEPHEN'S MIRACLES AND PREACHING, 8-15.

1. And in those days, the number of the disciples increasing, there arose a murmuring of the Greeks against the Hebrews, for that their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.

2. Then the twelve calling together the multitude of the disciples, said: It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

3. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

4. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

1. **In those days**; i.e., when the Apostles were fearlessly continuing their preaching, in spite of the threats, imprisonments, and scourging they had suffered from the Sanhedrim.

**A murmuring of the Greeks**, etc. The Greeks here mentioned were Hellenists, that is, converted Jews who, living outside of Palestine among the Greeks, or Greek-speaking peoples, used the Greek language in their business and intercourse with others. The **Hebrews** were natives of Palestine who had been converted to Christianity, but who spoke Aramaic. This latter class of converts naturally looked down upon the former because of their pagan language and associations, and there consequently seems to have been some unfairness in dealing with them, in distributing to them food and other necessities of life. **Widows** were a peculiarly destitute class among the Jews, and so were objects of special care in the infant Church.

2. The preaching of the Gospel was the prime duty of the Apostles, and this they could not sacrifice for the work of serving at table, of distributing food or clothing, or the like.

3. The Apostles left it to the body of the faithful to choose the deacons, so that they might select those who would be agreeable to all, and who would devote themselves to common interests.

5. And the saying was liked by all the multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch.

6. These they set before the apostles; and they praying, imposed hands upon them.

Seven in number were chosen, perhaps because the city of Jerusalem was divided into seven parts; or because there were seven different groups or churches in the city; or because there were seven days in the week. At any rate, we know that "seven" was a sacred number among the Hebrews. These seven were required to be (a) men of recognized integrity of life; (b) full of the Holy Ghost, i.e., men whose external life showed the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and His gifts; (c) men of wisdom and prudence in dealing with others. The faithful were allowed to choose these seven deacons, but the Apostles retained the right to confer on them authority and formal appointment.

5. **Stephen . . . and Philip, etc.** Stephen, the first to give his life as a martyr for Christ, was above all full of faith and the Holy Ghost. Outside the New Testament we have no further information concerning these seven deacons. From their Greek names it would seem that they were all Hellenist Christians,<sup>7</sup> except Nicolas, who was of pagan origin; at least, all were of Jewish birth, whether Greek-speaking or Palestinian, except Nicolas of Antioch in Syria. St. Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* i. 26), St. Epiphanius (*Adv. Haer.* i. 25), St. Augustine (*De Haers.* v), and others say that the deacon Nicolas afterwards lost the faith and became the founder of the heretical sect known as the Nicolaites; but Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 20), Clement of Alex. (*Strom.* iii. 4), and Ignatius of Antioch (*Ad Trall.*) think otherwise.

6. **They praying imposed hands.** The Sacred Order of deaconship was conferred on the seven candidates by this prayer and imposition of hands; by it they were consecrated and given authority to preach the Gospel and take part in the ministry of the Church (1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 22; 2 Tim. i. 6). The imposition of hands was a ceremony used in the Old Testament to consecrate a person or thing to God (Exod. xxix. 10, 15; Lev. i. 4; Num. viii. 10) and to communicate or transmit authority (Num. xxvii. 18; Deut. xxxiv. 9). This ceremony, therefore, combined with liturgical prayer, was

7. And the word of the Lord increased; and the number of the disciples was multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly: a great multitude also of the priests obeyed the faith.

8. And Stephen, full of grace and fortitude, did great wonders and signs among the people.

9. Now there arose some of that which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia, disputing with Stephen.

10. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit that spoke.

the form of ordination by which the deacons received the authority and grace to perform their sacred duties; and these duties were not only to serve at table, look after the poor, and other temporal affairs, but to preach the Gospel, assist at the celebration of the Eucharist, and distribute Holy Communion. The same ceremonies of prayer and imposition of hands were observed in the ordination of priests and Bishops. Just what were the nature and wording of the prayers used for ordination in early times we learn not from Scripture, but from tradition.

It is not *de fide*, but theologically certain, that deaconship is a Sacred Order. This we gather from the Council of Trent (Sess. xxiii. can. vi), which says that, besides Bishops and priests, ministers also belong to the divinely instituted Hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

7. Through the ordination and work of the deacons all discord was removed from the infant Church, and the number of converts was very much increased. Although as a class the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were very hostile to Christianity, we learn from the present verse that great numbers of them were converted.

9. **Synagogue.** See on Matthew iv. 23. The Talmud speaks of about as many as four hundred and eighty Synagogues in the city of Jerusalem at this time. **Libertines.** These were liberated Roman slaves. They were probably descendants of those Jews whom Pompey brought to Rome in 63 B.C. The **Cyrenians** were inhabitants of Cyrene, the capital of Libya, in northern Africa. Jews lived there in great numbers. **Alexandrians**, i.e., inhabitants of Alexandria, where the Jews were still more numerous and very wealthy. **Cilicia** was a province of Asia Minor, where St. Paul was born. **Asia** was in the west of Asia Minor with Ephesus as its capital.

11. Then they suborned men to say, they had heard him speak words of blasphemy against Moses and against God.

12. And they stirred up the people, and the ancients, and the scribes; and running together, they took him, and brought him to the council.

13. And they set up false witnesses, who said: This man ceaseth not to speak words against the holy place and the law.

14. For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the traditions which Moses delivered unto us.

15. And all that sat in the council, looking on him, saw his face as if it had been the face of an angel.

It is not certain whether all these different groups of Hellenists belonged to one Synagogue, or whether each group had its own. The Greek text seems to favor the opinion which divides them into two groups: (a) the Libertines, the Cyrenians, and the Alexandrians, who had their own synagogue; (b) those from Cilicia and Asia, who also had a synagogue of their own.

11. **They suborned men.** Not able to answer the arguments of Stephen, these enemies resorted to calumny, and tried to influence the people and the rulers against him by saying that he had blasphemed against God and against Moses, God's legislator.

12. **And running together;** i.e., suddenly coming upon him they brought him before the Sanhedrim.

14. **We have heard him say, etc.** Very probably they had heard Stephen repeat or refer to the prophecy of our Lord (Matt. xxiv. 2 ff.) regarding the destruction of Jerusalem. Perhaps, too, he had spoken quite openly about the New Kingdom, the New Law, the New Sacrifice, etc., which were to supersede the old. From all this they falsely tried to make a case against Stephen, and condemn him as guilty of blasphemy.

15. **The face of an angel.** Those who looked on St. Stephen's face doubtless hoped to see guilt reflected there; but they saw, on the contrary, the innocence and heavenly beauty of an angel.

## CHAPTER VII

THE DISCOURSE OF ST. STEPHEN BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM: HE RECALLS THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, 1-8.

JOSEPH WAS SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN, 9-16.

MOSES WAS DISREGARDED AND REJECTED BY HIS PEOPLE, 17-46.

ST. STEPHEN CORRECTS THE EXAGGERATED VIEWS OF HIS HEARERS REGARDING THE HOLINESS OF THE TEMPLE, 47-53.

ST. STEPHEN IS STONED, 54-59.

1. Then the high priest said: Are these things so?

2. Who said: Ye men, brethren, and fathers, hear. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charan.

1, 2. The High Priest, presiding over the Sanhedrim, gives the accused a chance to defend himself. The discourse which follows is the longest found in the Acts. It is a brief history of the Jewish people in their relations with God from Abraham to Solomon. In it St. Stephen first calls attention to the covenant which God—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—had made with His people; and he points out, on the one hand, God's faithfulness to His part of the covenant, and the infidelity of the Jews, on the other, to their part of it. He shows how God in His goodness sent prophet after prophet to remind the people of their duty, and how they turned against these heaven-sent messengers, disregarded them, cast them out, and slew them. Lastly he calls to their minds the true purposes which the Tabernacle and, later, the Temple were intended to serve in Israel's worship of God; and he contrasts these with the cold formalism and spiritual pride which became the prevailing characteristics of Judaism.

To understand the scope and purpose of St. Stephen's discourse we need only remember the accusations against which he was de-

3. And said to him: Go forth out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.

fending himself. These were: (a) that he had blasphemed against God; (b) that he had blasphemed against Moses and predicted the end of the Mosaic observances; (c) that he had announced the destruction of the Temple. St. Stephen, therefore, appeals to three periods of Jewish history, i.e., to the period of the patriarchs (verses 2-17), to the Mosaic period (verses 18-44), and to the period of David and Solomon (verses 45-47). He protests his firm faith in God, the Revealer and Protector of Israel, and affirms his reverence for Moses and the Temple, but shows that in primitive times God had made revelations to men, and had enriched the Jews with many blessings, even while they were outside the promised land.

Some have questioned the authenticity of this discourse of St. Stephen's, on account of the apparent contradictions between certain things in it and the corresponding accounts given in the Old Testament. These discrepancies will be considered in detail below. Here it may be said in a general way that if this discourse was not spoken by St. Stephen, it is impossible to understand why it was concluded, or ended incomplete. Why did the author, after laying down his principles at such length, fail to apply them and thus respond directly to the accusations which they were manifestly intended to refute?

**Ye men, brethren,** etc. St. Stephen first addresses the people of Israel, and then the Sanhedrists, "fathers."

**The God of glory;** i.e., the most glorious God. By these words St. Stephen shows his great reverence for God, and by consequence the absurdity of the first accusation made against him.

**Mesopotamia** was the fertile region lying between the rivers Euphrates on the west and Tigris on the east. Ur of the Chaldees was the home of Abraham; it was south of what was afterwards called Mesopotamia, near the Persian Gulf.

**Before he dwelt in Charan.** The city of Charan, or Haran in Hebrew, was on the Euphrates, about an hour's journey south of Edessa.

3. There is a difficulty here. According to Genesis xii. 1-5 the words of this verse were spoken to Abraham when he was in Charan,

4. Then he went out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Charan. And from thence, after his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein you now dwell.

5. And he gave him no inheritance in it; no, not the pace of a foot: but he promised to give it him in possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child.

and not "before he dwelt" there. *Answer:* (a) There was a tradition among the Jews that Abraham received the command to "go forth," etc., on two different occasions: first, when he was at Ur of the Chaldees, after which he went to Charan, and again when he was at Charan; (b) others think that Genesis xii. 1-5 refers to the one mandate given before at Ur, and that it was in virtue of this first command that Abraham went forth once more, from Charan towards Canaan, his ultimate destination. In fact Genesis xv. 7 supposes, besides the apparition at Charan, one made at Ur.

4. **After his father was dead.** St. Stephen is here accused of contradicting Genesis. He says that Abraham did not depart from Charan until after his father Thare was dead. But Genesis xi. 32 tells us that Thare was two hundred and five years old when he died in Charan, Genesis xi. 26 says that Thare was seventy years old when he begot Abraham, and Genesis xii. 4 says that Abraham was seventy-five years old when he departed from Charan for Palestine. From these figures it would follow against St. Stephen's account that Thare lived in Charan sixty years after the departure of Abraham. *Answer:* (a) Following St. Augustine most exegetes say that Genesis xi. 26 means only that Thare was seventy years old before he had any children, and they add that Abraham, although first named, was not the oldest, but perhaps the youngest of Thare's children. Often the Scriptures put first those who are the youngest in a family. Cf. Gen. ix. 24; xlviii. 5, 14, 20; Exod. v. 20; 1 Paralip. i. 28; iv. 1, etc. They therefore conclude that Thare was one hundred and thirty years old when Abraham was born. (b) The Samaritan Pentateuch states that Thare lived seventy-five years after the birth of Abraham, which would show, either that he was one hundred and thirty years old when Abraham was born, or that he died at the age of one hundred and forty-five years, instead of two hundred and five.

5. **No inheritance;** i.e., no fixed or permanent possession. The Canaanite tribes then had possession of the towns of the promised



6. And God said to him: That his seed should sojourn in a strange country, and that they should bring them under bondage, and treat them evil four hundred years.

7. And the nation which they shall serve will I judge, said the Lord; and after these things they shall go out, and shall serve me in this place.

8. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision, and so he begot Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob; and Jacob the twelve patriarchs.

9. And the patriarchs, through envy, sold Joseph into Egypt; and God was with him,

10. And delivered him out of all his tribulations: and he gave him favour and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt; and he appointed him governor over Egypt, and over all his house.

11. Now there came a famine upon all Egypt and Chanaan, and great tribulation; and our fathers found no food.

12. But when Jacob had heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers first:

13. And at the second time, Joseph was known by his brethren, and his kindred was made known to Pharaoh.

land. Abraham there bought a piece of ground from Ephron the Hethite, not for a dwelling place, but for a sepulchre (Gen. xxiii. 6-20).

6. **In a strange country;** i.e., in Egypt, where they dwelt in bondage about four hundred years (Gen. xv. 13). The precise period was four hundred and thirty years (Exod. xii. 40; Gal. iii. 17), which was from the call of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt. See below, on xiii. 20.

7. **Will I judge;** i.e., I will punish. **In this place;** i.e., in the country of Canaan.

8. **The covenant of circumcision.** God had promised Abraham that He would bless him and his descendants and give them in possession the land of Canaan, and Abraham promised in turn to obey and serve God alone. As a seal and sanction of this covenant God gave the ceremony of circumcision to Abraham and his descendants. **The twelve patriarchs** were the twelve sons of Jacob, and these became the heads of the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. xxix-xxx, xlix).

9, 10. See Genesis xxxvii-xli.

11-13. Joseph was sold to the Egyptians by his envious brothers, and afterwards he became their saviour. St. Stephen's hearers must surely have recognized that Joseph was a type of Christ.

14. And Joseph sending, called thither Jacob, his father, and all his kindred, seventy-five souls.

15. So Jacob went down into Egypt; and he died, and our fathers.

16. And they were translated into Sichem, and were laid in the sepulchre, that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Hemor, the son of Sichem.

**The second time; i.e., on the second trip to Egypt, Joseph was recognized by his brethren.**

14. **Seventy-five souls.** St. Stephen was quoting from the Septuagint, with which, being himself most probably a Hellenist, he was familiar. The Hebrew and the Vulgate of Genesis xlii. 27 say there were seventy souls. How explain this difference? *Answer:* Sixty-six descendants went down into Egypt with Jacob (Gen. xlii. 26); add to these Jacob himself and Joseph, together with the latter's two sons, Ephraim and Manasses, and we have the seventy of the Vulgate and of Genesis xlii. 27; and if to these seventy we add five descendants of Ephraim and Manasses, the seventy-five of the Septuagint is explained.

15. **And our fathers.** Jacob and all the patriarchs died in a strange land far from Palestine.

16. Shortly after his death Jacob's remains were brought back to Palestine and buried at Mambre near Hebron in the ground purchased by Abraham from Ephron the Hethite. The body of Joseph was also brought and buried in a field at Sichem. A tradition admitted by St. Jerome says the bodies of the other patriarchs were buried at Sichem, about twenty miles-north of Jerusalem.

**That Abraham bought . . . of the son of Hemor.** This passage causes a difficulty. So far as we know Abraham never made the purchase here attributed to him. It was Jacob who bought a field at Sichem from the son of Hemor (Gen. xxxiii. 19, 20). The purchase made by Abraham was at Hebron from Ephron the Hethite, and not at Sichem. *Answer:* (a) Some explain this difficulty by saying that here we have an error of a copyist, who transcribed the name *Abraham* for *Jacob*; but this explanation seems insufficient, since the error is found in all MSS., and since all the circumstances of the purchase here mentioned are quite different from those of the purchase made by Jacob (Gen. xxxiii. 19, 20). (b) Others would have us think that Stephen in the heat of his

17. And when the time of the promise drew near, which God had promised to Abraham, the people increased, and were multiplied in Egypt,

18. Till another king arose in Egypt, who knew not Joseph.

19. This same dealing craftily with our race, afflicted our fathers, that they should expose their children, to the end they might not be kept alive.

20. At the same time was Moses born, and he was acceptable to God: who was nourished three months in his father's house.

21. And when he was exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son.

discourse confused the two names. St. Stephen, they say, was not inspired when he pronounced this discourse, and hence could have erred, while St. Luke in relating it has given it very exactly and objectively without comment on its correctness and veracity. But this explanation must be rejected, because it is inadmissible that St. Stephen could have erred in a matter so well known and of such importance without arousing a protest from the Sanhedrim. (c) The majority of Catholic interpreters believe that Abraham had purchased a field at Sichem, and that Jacob only repurchased it. This is not explicitly stated in Genesis, but it is presupposed to what we read in Genesis xii. 6, 7, where we are told that Abraham built an altar to the Lord near Sichem. It is hard to understand how he could have built an altar and preserved it from profanation, without having possession of the ground on which it stood.

**The son of Sichem.** The best Greek MSS. and the critical edition of Tichendorf and Nestle have simply, "Of the sons of Hemor at *Sichem*."

17. **And when the time**, etc.,—rather, "as," or "in proportion as" (*καθώς*) the time drew near when God had promised to give the land of Canaan to the seed of Abraham, etc.

18. **Another king**; i.e., a stranger king (*ἕτερος*), who doubtless pertained to another dynasty. This was likely Thothmes III (1515-1461 B.C.).

19. **That they should expose**, etc., by casting their male children into the river (Exod. i. 16-22).

20. **Acceptable to God**; i.e., exceeding fair or comely in the sight of God. This is a Hebraism to express that Moses was not only very beautiful (Exod. ii. 2), but that God had a special care of him.

22. And Moses was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; and he was mighty in his words and in his deeds.

23. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel.

24. And when he had seen one of them suffer wrong, he defended him; and striking the Egyptian, he avenged him who suffered the injury.

25. And he thought that his brethren understood that God by his hand would save them; but they understood it not.

26. And the day following, he shewed himself to them when they were at strife; and would have reconciled them in peace, saying: Men, ye are brethren; why hurt you one another?

27. But he that did the injury to his neighbour thrust him away, saying: Who hath appointed thee prince and judge over us?

28. What, wilt thou kill me, as thou didst yesterday kill the Egyptian?

29. And Moses fled upon this word, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begot two sons.

22. **In all the wisdom, etc.** These particulars were from tradition. Cf. Philo, *Life of Moses*, i. 5. **He was mighty** at the court of Pharaoh, because of his Egyptian learning.

23. **Forty years old.** This also was a tradition among the Jews. **His brethren.** Although Moses had been educated at Pharaoh's court, he did not forget that he was a Jew, and went to assist his fellow Jews who were sorely oppressed by the Egyptians.

24. **He defended him.** Seeing a Jew unjustly treated by an Egyptian Moses, moved, as St. Augustine says, by the Spirit of God, took revenge on the latter and killed him. By this fact God wished to show that he had chosen Moses to be the liberator of His oppressed people.

25. Moses thought the Jews would remember the promise of God to Abraham, and would recognize him as sent for their liberator, but they, on the contrary, rejected him.

Instead of accepting Moses as their deliverer, the Jews cast him away and accused him of murdering the Egyptian whom he had killed in defense of a Jew. What a people of ingratitude and perversity!

29. Fearing lest he should be arrested for the killing of the Egyptian and being rejected by his own brethren, Moses fled to the land of Madian, which was the eastern part of the peninsula of Sinai in the neighborhood of Mount Sinai,

30. And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the desert of mount Sina, an angel in a flame of fire in a bush.

31. And Moses seeing it, wondered at the sight. And as he drew near to view it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying:

32. I am the God of thy fathers; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses being terrified, durst not behold.

33. And the Lord said to him: Loose the shoes from thy feet, for the place wherein thou standest, is holy ground.

34. Seeing I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, and I will send thee into Egypt.

35. This Moses, whom they refused, saying: Who hath appointed thee prince and judge? him God sent to be prince and redeemer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush.

36. He brought them out, doing wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the desert forty years.

37. This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel: A prophet shall God raise up to you of your own brethren, as myself: him shall you hear.

38. This is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on mount Sina, and with our fathers; who received the words of life to give unto us.

30. Moses was now eighty years of age. **Sina**, or **Sinai**, was the same as **Horeb**. **An angel**, etc. St. Thomas Aquinas and the Scholastics generally hold that in the appearances of God recorded in the Pentateuch, it was an angel who appeared and spoke in God's name. The fire was a symbol of the divine presence. Cf. *Exod.* xxiv. 16, 17.

32. **The God of Abraham**, etc. By these words God recalled to Moses' mind the covenant which He had made with the patriarchs.

33. **Loose the shoes**, etc. To appear barefoot in the presence of a person has always been considered in the East an act of great reverence; hence also the priests exercised their functions in the Temple with *discalced* feet.

35. **This Moses**, etc. Here St. Stephen manifests his great reverence for Moses, whom he had been accused of blaspheming; and at the same time he reminds his hearers of the ingratitude shown by their fathers to this same Moses, their deliverer.

36. See *Exod.* v. 1; xii. 36, 37; xv. 21, 22, etc.

37. **A prophet**, etc. See *Deut.* xviii. 15-18.

38. **With the angel**, etc. In the desert at the foot of Mount Sinai Moses was the mediator between the angel of God and their fathers. He received God's orders from the angel and transmitted them to the Jews.

39. Whom our fathers would not obey; but thrust him away, and in their hearts turned back into Egypt,

40. Saying to Aaron: Make us gods to go before us. For as for this Moses, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.

41. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands.

42. And God turned, and gave them up to serve the host of heaven, as it is written in the books of the prophets: Did you offer victims and sacrifices to me for forty years, in the desert, O house of Israel?

43. And you took unto you the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Rempham, figures which you made to adore them. And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.

**The words of life; i.e., the Law, including the Ten Commandments and all the communications God made to Moses on Mount Sinai. Here again St. Stephen showed his esteem for Moses and the Law he promulgated.**

39. In their hearts, wishing to return to the idolatry and sinfulness of Egypt.

40, 41. While Moses remained for forty days on the mountain with God the Israelites, not knowing what had become of him, turned to their idolatry.

42. Displeased by their ingratitude and incredulity God turned away from the Israelites, by withdrawing His grace, and permitted them to fall into the gross idolatry of worshipping the sun, moon, and stars (Rom. i. 23, 24). Cf. Deut. xvii. 3; 4 Kings xvii. 16; xxi. 3, etc.

**Book of the prophets; i.e., Amos v. 25-27.** The prophet reproves the Israelites for neglecting the service of God and turning to idols during their sojourn in the desert. Not that they had neglected all sacrifices to God, because the Levitical sacrifices were then first instituted; but that their offerings were few and intermingled with idolatrous worship. Circumcision and the Sabbath observance were entirely interrupted during their forty years of wandering (Josue v. 5, 6; Exech. xx. 10-26).

43. And you took unto you, etc. Instead of the ark of the covenant, they carried around in their journeys the shrine of the sun-god Moloch, who was worshipped by the Ammonites and Moabites. A statue of Moloch, with arms outstretched and elevated, and the head of a beast, was used as a furnace of fire in

44. The tabernacle of the testimony was with our fathers in the desert, as God ordained for them, speaking to Moses, that he should make it according to the form which he had seen.

45. Which also our fathers receiving, brought in with Jesus, into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David.

46. Who found grace before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob.

47. But Solomon built him a house.

48. Yet the most High dwelleth not in houses made by hands, as the prophet saith :

49. Heaven is my throne, and the earth my footstool. What house will you build me? saith the Lord; or what is the place of my resting?

50. Hath not my hand made all these things?

which the heathen used to cast their children in sacrifice to the god (Lev. xx. 2, 3; Jer. vii. 31). For this shrine of Moloch the Israelites had abandoned the Tabernacle of God.

**Rempham**, or **Refam** or **Raifan** is from the Septuagint and corresponds to the Hebrew *Kiyoun* or *Kaiwan*; it signifies some god whom they worshipped, perhaps Saturn.

**I will carry you away**, etc. The reference is to the Babylonian captivity. The Hebrew and Greek of Amos have "Damascus" in place of Babylon, but the sense is the same. To go to Babylon from Palestine it was necessary to pass through Syria and the territory of Damascus.

44. **The tabernacle of the testimony**, — so called, because it was a tent which contained the ark of the covenant in which were the tables of the Law, the true testimony of God's revelation and of His will (Exod. xxv. 9-40). By this St. Stephen wished to show his respect for the Temple, and to remind his hearers that the Temple was for God, and not God for the Temple, as they appeared to think.

45-47. The meaning of these verses is that the Tabernacle which the Israelites had received from Moses was brought into Canaan by Josue (Jesus) while that land was still in the possession of the Gentiles, the Canaanites, whom God drove out, and that it continued to be the place of worship of God until the time of David, who wished to build a Temple as a more suitable place for God's glory. But the privilege of building a Temple was reserved for Solomon, David's son.

51. You stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you also.

52. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them who foretold of the coming of the Just One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers:

53. Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it.

54. Now hearing these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed with their teeth at him.

55. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looking up steadfastly to heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And he said: Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.

In verses 44-47 St. Stephen states the true purpose of God's house, and in the following verses, 48-50, he corrects the mistaken ideas which the Jews came to have of the Temple. God is not for the Temple; but, contrariwise, the Temple is a place which God has granted for the sake of His people, where they are to offer Him prayers and sacrifices acceptable in His sight. God is greater than any place, and the universe is not able to contain His glory. The prophet cited in verses 48-50 is *Isaias lxvi. 1, 2*. The citation is according to the Septuagint.

51. With this verse St. Stephen passes from the calm language of historical recitation to a vehement and direct denunciation of the hereditary wickedness of the people of Israel. He calls them **stiffnecked**, i.e., unwilling to bear the burden of any law; **uncircumcised in heart**, i.e., unfaithful to their promise and obligation of obedience to God's law. This turn in the Saint's discourse was likely due to some open manifestations of disapproval on the part of his hearers.

52. **Which of the prophets, etc.** See on Matthew xxiii. 34-37; Luke xi. 47-51. **The Just One** refers to the Messiah. **The betrayers, etc.** Those addressed were even worse than their forefathers, because they had betrayed our Lord Himself, and had handed Him over to Pilate for condemnation to death.

53. **By the disposition of angels**; i.e., through the instrumentality of angels, or at the dispositions or ministrations of angels. The angels were intermediaries in giving the Law (Gal. iii. 19; Heb. ii. 2).

55. **The glory of God**; i.e., a certain brightness or clearness that



56. And they crying out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and with one accord ran violently upon him.

57. And casting him forth without the city, they stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man, whose name was Saul.

58. And they stoned Stephen, invoking, and saying: Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

59. And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord. And Saul was consenting to his death.

indicated the divine presence. **And Jesus standing**, as if to come to his assistance and welcome him to heaven.

56. **Stopped their ears**, pretending to be shocked at the blasphemy of St. Stephen's vision, of which they saw nothing.

57. **Casting him forth**; etc. The Law (Lev. xxiv. 14) prescribed that the blasphemer should be taken outside the camp of Israel and stoned to death.

**Laid down their garments**, etc.; i.e., their outer garments, so as to leave their arms free for action. The witnesses were the first to execute the sentence (Deut. xvii. 7). The **young man** (*νεανίας*) was St. Paul, who was then about thirty years of age. He was perhaps the chief of St. Stephen's accusers, and this he made known to his companion St. Luke.

58. St. Stephen's dying words were strikingly similar to those of His divine Master (Luke xxiii. 34).

59. It is believed that this beautiful prayer of the dying martyr gained for St. Paul the grace which converted him.

## CHAPTER VIII

THE CHURCH IS PERSECUTED, 1-4.

THE DEACON PHILIP CONVERTS THE SAMARITANS,  
5-8.

SIMON MAGUS, 9-13.

ST. PETER AND ST. JOHN IN SAMARIA, 14-25.

PHILIP BAPTIZES THE EUNUCH OF ETHIOPIA, 26-40.

1. And at that time there was raised a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all dispersed through the countries of Judea, and Samaria, except the apostles.

2. And devout men took order for Stephen's funeral, and made great mourning over him.

3. But Saul made havock of the church, entering in from house to house, and dragging away men and women, committed them to prison.

4. They therefore that were dispersed, went about preaching the word of God.

5. And Philip going down to the city of Samaria, preached Christ unto them.

6. And the people with one accord were attentive to those things which were said by Philip, hearing, and seeing the miracles which he did.

7. For many of them who had unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, went out.

8. And many, taken with the palsy, and that were lame, were healed.

1. Immediately after the death of St. Stephen there arose a general persecution of the Christians of Jerusalem; and those who were better known, who had exercised the ministry of preaching there, were all dispersed, except the Apostles, who remained to comfort the faithful.

2. Devout men took order, etc.; i.e., they took care, etc. (*συνεκόμισαν*), which here means they buried his body.

5. Philip, the deacon. To the city of Samaria, — rather, "to a city of Samaria" — there is no article in the Greek of most MSS. It is uncertain whether this city was the one then called *Sebaste*, the capital of Samaria, or some other city of that province. Very probably it was the capital city, since in the best MSS. (N A B) we

9. There was therefore great joy in that city. Now there was a certain man named Simon, who before had been a magician in that city, seducing the people of Samaria, giving out that he was some great one:

10. To whom they all gave ear, from the least to the greatest, saying: This man is the power of God, which is called great.

11. And they were attentive to him, because, for a long time, he had bewitched them with his magical practices.

12. But when they had believed Philip preaching of the kingdom of God, in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.

13. Then Simon himself believed also; and being baptized, he adhered to Philip. And being astonished, wondered to see the signs and exceeding great miracles which were done.

14. Now when the apostles, who were in Jerusalem, had heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John.

15. Who, when they were come, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost.

find the article prefixed to the noun (*τὴν πόλιν*). Patrizi, however, thinks there is question here, not of the city, but of the country of Samaria.

9. **Simon**, commonly called Simon the Magician. Originally the *Magi*, or wise men, were held in high esteem in the Orient, where they were known for their knowledge of philosophy, astronomy, and the like; but later they degenerated, and the term *Magi* came to mean those who practised sorcery. This is its meaning in the Acts. The Simon here mentioned was a native of Samaria; he was given to the study of hidden sciences and taught Gnostic doctrines. He is considered by the Fathers as the first heretic, and the type of religious imposters.

12. The people looked upon Simon as a divinity incarnate, or as an intermediary between God and matter. But at the preaching of Philip they turned to Christ and were baptized. The force of the Gospel reduced to nothing the influence of Simon.

13. Most of the Fathers think that Simon's faith was only external and feigned. Acquainted with all sorts of sorcery and jugglery, he was unable to understand the miracles of Philip. Perhaps it was the hope to get the same power which Philip had that induced him to receive baptism (verses 18, 19).

14. **They sent . . . Peter and John**; i.e., the Apostles with common consent judged it best to send Peter and John to complete the work begun by Philip in Samaria. The meaning is not that the body of the Apostles was superior to Peter, as we know from many

16. For he was not as yet come upon any of them; but they were only baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

17. Then they laid their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.

18. And when Simon saw, that by the imposition of the hands of the apostles, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money,

19. Saying: Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I shall lay my hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost. But Peter said to him:

20. Keep thy money to thyself, to perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money.

other instances. Philip could baptize, but the conferring of Confirmation and the higher gifts of the Spirit was reserved to the Apostles.

16. The faithful of Samaria had received the grace of the Holy Ghost in Baptism, but had not yet received the increase of grace which comes with Confirmation. Besides an increase of grace and the imparting of the seven gifts of the Holy Ghost, which strengthen and fortify the Christian, the Sacrament of Confirmation in early times seemed also to impart a special power of working miracles and speaking with tongues.

17. They received the Holy Ghost, in the Sacrament of Confirmation. We have here the following conditions necessary for a Sacrament: (a) the minister, i.e., the Apostles; (b) a sensible sign, i.e., the imposition of hands, doubtless with *unction*, on the subject, and the prayer or form, which doubtless also accompanied the imposition of hands, as in vi. 6; (c) the effect, i.e., a special communication of the Holy Ghost with His gifts.

The Fathers sometimes speak of the Holy Ghost as given through the imposition of hands; sometimes as communicated through the anointing with oil. But this is only because they regarded these two actions as inseparable, and consequently as forming but one complete action. Cf. Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem*, de *Resurr. carn.* viii; St. Cyprian, *Epist.* 70, 72.

18, 19. He offered them money. In this act on the part of Simon, who tried to purchase spiritual things with money, we have the origin of the term "simony." Hence we see Simon's bad disposition, and the reason why he most probably received Baptism. He was not concerned about the grace of the Holy Ghost.

21. Thou hast no part nor lot in this matter. For thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

22. Do penance therefore for this thy wickedness; and pray to God, that perhaps this thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.

23. For I see thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.

24. Then Simon answering, said: Pray you for me to the Lord, that none of these things which you have spoken may come upon me.

25. And they indeed having testified and preached the word of the Lord, returned to Jerusalem, and preached the gospel to many countries of the Samaritans.

26. Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying: Arise, go towards the south, to the way that goeth down from Jerusalem into Gaza: this is desert.

27. And rising up, he went. And behold a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch, of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge over all her treasures, had come to Jerusalem to adore.

28. And he was returning, sitting in his chariot, and reading Isaias the prophet.

21. **No part nor lot, etc.**; i.e., Simon was unworthy to receive the power he wished of communicating the Holy Ghost.

22. **That perhaps, etc.** On account of Simon's very bad dispositions St. Peter expresses a doubt as to the possibility of his being forgiven. See on Matthew xii. 31, 32.

23. **The gall of bitterness**, is a Hebrew expression signifying a very grievous sin, black with malice and injurious to others (Deut. xxix. 18; Heb. xii. 15).

24. **Pray you for me, etc.** There seems to have been no sincerity in Simon's repentance, otherwise St. Peter would have shown him mercy. The Fathers tell us that he became a most bitter enemy of Christianity and the father of all the heresies (Justin, *Apol.* i. 26, 56; Iren., *Adv. Haer.* i. 23, 1; Tertull., *De Praescript*, 46). It is a tradition that he died a miserable death in Rome.

26. **Gaza**, one of the principal cities of the Philistines, was on the southwestern confines of Palestine, on the edge of the desert between Egypt and Palestine. Philip took the road from Samaria to Gaza which led through Hebron, and this was a "desert," i.e., a desolate and uninhabited way.

27. **Ethiopia** was the region south of Egypt now called Abyssinia. **An eunuch**, who was probably one of the principal functionaries employed in the palace of the Queen. **Candace** was most likely the name of the dynasty, or of all the Queens of Ethiopia, like

29. And the Spirit said to Philip: Go near, and join thyself to this chariot.  
 30. And Philip running thither, heard him reading the prophet Isaias. And he said: Thinkest thou that thou understandest what thou readest?

31. Who said: And how can I, unless some man shew me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him.

32. And the place of the scripture which he was reading was this: He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb without voice before his shearer, so openeth he not his mouth.

33. In humility his judgment was taken away. His generation who shall declare, for his life shall be taken from the earth?

34. And the eunuch answering Philip, said: I beseech thee, of whom doth the prophet speak this? of himself, or of some other man?

35. Then Philip, opening his mouth, and beginning at this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.

Pharaoh in Egypt. **To adore**, which shows that the eunuch was either a Jew or a proselyte.

29. **The Spirit**; i.e., the Holy Ghost, by an internal inspiration, or an external revelation, said to Philip, etc.

31. **How can I**, etc. The eunuch, although evidently a man of intelligence, found private interpretation of the Scriptures not so easy as do Protestants; he felt the need of the Church in this matter.

32. The passage he was reading was that of Isaias liii. 7 ff., which speaks of the bitter sufferings and death of the Messiah for His people. The eunuch was reading the Septuagint version.

33. **In humility his judgment**, etc. This may mean: (a) in his humiliation, bereft of friends and defenders, our Lord was denied a just sentence and condemned to an unjust death; or (b) in the humiliation of His voluntary death, the sentence of death pronounced against Him by men was taken away or cancelled by His glorious Resurrection and victory over death.

**His generation who shall declare?** The most probable meanings of these words are: (a) Who can declare or understand the cruelty of the contemporaries of the Saviour who will put Him to death? Hence this interpretation refers the words to Christ's temporary existence. (b) Who can explain the eternal generation of the Word of God, who, as man, will suffer death in obedience to His Father? (c) Who can describe the number of those that will believe in Christ, risen and triumphant over death?

35. **Preached unto him Jesus**; i.e., Philip applied the passage to Jesus, in whom the prophecy was fulfilled. Cf. 1 Peter ii. 22-24.

36. And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water; and the eunuch said: See, here is water: what doth hinder me from being baptized?

37. And Philip said: If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest. And he answering, said: I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

38. And he commanded the chariot to stand still; and they went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him.

39. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord took away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more. And he went on his way rejoicing.

40. But Philip was found in Azotus; and passing through, he preached the gospel to all the cities, till he came to Caesarea.

36. While explaining to the eunuch the doctrines of Christ, Philip must have touched on Baptism, and hence the eunuch wished to be baptized.

37. Philip exacted an external and explicit confession of faith before he would admit the eunuch to Baptism. This verse, although cited by Irenaeus and Cyprian, is not found in many MSS.

39. The sudden disappearance of Philip made the eunuch understand the greatness of the benefit he had received, and the spiritual character of its messenger. Tradition says that the eunuch became the Apostle of Ethiopia.

40. **Azotus** was a city of the Philistines north of Gaza. Often besieged by the kings of Assyria and the Pharaohs of Egypt, it was finally destroyed during the wars of the Maccabees.

**Caesarea** was on the western seacoast of Palestine, a little to the south of Mount Carmel. It was built by Herod I in honor of Caesar Augustus, and hence received the name of Caesarea. This Caesarea must not be confounded with Caesarea Philippi. See on Matthew xvi. 13.

## CHAPTER IX

THE CONVERSION OF SAUL, 1-18.

ST. PAUL AT DAMASCUS, 19-25.

ST. PAUL GOES TO JERUSALEM, 26-30.

ST. PETER VISITS THE CHURCH, HEALS ENEAS, AND  
RAISES TABITHA TO LIFE, 31-43.

1. And Saul, as yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest,

2. And asked of him letters to Damascus, to the synagogues: that if he found any men and women of this way, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

1, 2. Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin, but a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and therefore by birth a Roman citizen. As a youth he was taken to Jerusalem and studied at the feet of Gamaliel. He belonged to the strictest sect of the Pharisees and was zealous above all others for the Pharisaic observances. St. Paul was most probably converted in A.D. 35, and was about thirty years old at the time. See on vii. 57.

Full of deadly hate towards the Christian, Saul was not satisfied with what happened to St. Stephen, but, continuing to persecute the Church, he wanted to extend the persecution outside of Palestine. He therefore went to the High Priest, Annas, and requested "letters" authorizing him to persecute the Christians in Damascus, if he should find there any men or women of **this way**, i.e., of the Christian way of living. Damascus was the capital of Syria and situated about 125 miles northeast of Jerusalem. It was taken by the Romans under Pompey, but later (A.D. 37-38) fell to the Arabian king Aretas in the latter's war with Herod Antipas. The Jews in Damascus at this time were very numerous, and their synagogues were many.

St. Paul wanted to bring any Christians he might find in Damascus to Jerusalem, in order that they might there be punished by the



3. And as he went on his journey, it came to pass that he drew nigh to Damascus; and suddenly a light from heaven shined round about him.

4. And falling on the ground, he heard a voice saying to him: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

5. Who said: Who art thou, Lord? And he: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.

6. And he trembling and astonished, said: Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

7. And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the city, and there it shall be told thee what thou must do. Now the men who went in company with him, stood amazed, hearing indeed a voice, but seeing no man.

supreme council, or Sanhedrim, for what was considered their apostasy and blasphemy.

3. There are three distinct accounts given of the conversion of St. Paul,—here, in chapter xxii, and in chapter xxvi. The first is for Christian readers, the second was addressed to Jews, and the third to Agrippa and Festus.

**A light . . . shined, etc.;** i.e., a heavenly illumination appeared at midday (xxvi. 13).

4. **Saul, Saul, etc.** These words show the tenderness and compassion of Christ both toward the persecutor and the persecuted members of His mystical body, the Church. To persecute the faithful was to persecute our Lord Himself; to persecute the body was to persecute the Head.

5. **I am Jesus.** Our Lord stood before St. Paul in His glorified humanity, all radiant with light. **It is hard for thee to kick, etc.** These words are wanting here in the best MSS., but they are found in xxvi. 14. The **goad** was a long stick with an iron point at the end, used by drovers to urge on oxen or cattle. To kick against it was to suffer injury. The goad in St. Paul's case was the grace of God, the interior promptings of which he was resisting.

6, 7. Prostrate and trembling before his Master, Paul asks only to know what he should do; and our Lord tells him to go into the city of Damascus, and there God shall declare to him His will by means of Ananias. Paul must first be baptized and received into the Church by the ministers appointed by God.

**The men . . . stood amazed.** Those in company with St. Paul had also fallen to the ground (xxvi. 14), but were now standing in amazement.

The rationalists contend that there is a plain contradiction between

8. And Saul arose from the ground; and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing. But they leading him by the hands, brought him to Damascus.

9. And he was there three days, without sight, and he did neither eat nor drink.

10. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias. And the Lord said to him in a vision: Ananias. And he said: Behold I am here, Lord.

the statement of this verse, "the men . . . stood amazed," literally, *speechless*, and xxvi. 14, where Paul declare they all *fell to the ground*. *Answer*: There is no reason why both statements could not have been true. As just said above, the men in company with St. Paul could first have fallen to the ground from fright, and then stood up in amazement at what they saw and heard. But Pape and other critics hold that the *εἰστήκεισαν* of the present verse has the sense of an emphatic *εἶναι*, which could simply mean that the men became amazed and speechless; thus there would be no difference between the statement here given and that in xxvi. 14.

**Hearing indeed a voice**, etc. In xxii. 9 St. Paul seems to say the very contrary of this. *Answer*: Just as in xxii. 9 the companions saw a light, but perceived no person, so here they heard a human voice, i.e., a noise, but understood no words. "*Audiebant vocem solam, non vocem cum verbis*" (Bengel). Hence there is no contradiction.

The marginal reading of this verse in the Revised Edition of Oxford has rendered the words *ἀκούοντες τῆς φωνῆς*, *hearing the sound*. But when St. Luke in xxii. 9 speaks of the articulate voice of Christ which was audible to St. Paul alone, he employs the phrase *ἤκουσαν φωνήν*. Thus the same word, *φωνή*, by a different grammatical construction, may signify an inarticulate sound which all Paul's company heard, or the distinct and articulate voice which Paul alone heard.

8, 9. **He saw nothing**,—his eyes being still dazzled by the brightness that shone in our Lord's glorified body. His sight was withheld from him for three days, doubtless to give him time to consider in prayer and without distraction what had happened to him.

10. **Ananias** was certainly a devout Christian, and an influential member of the Church at Damascus, but more we do not know about him. Some have thought he was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord.

11. And the Lord said to him: Arise, and go into the street that is called Strait, and seek in the house of Judas, one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold he prayeth.

12. (And he saw a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight.)

13. But Ananias answered: Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem.

14. And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name.

15. And the Lord said to him: Go thy way; for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel.

16. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.

17. And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house. And laying his hands upon him, he said: Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, he that appeared to thee in the way as thou camest; that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost.

18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and rising up, he was baptized.

11. **Strait** was a broad street in Damascus running from east to west; it still exists in part. Of Judas here mentioned nothing further is known. **Tarsus** was the capital of Cilicia in southeastern Asia Minor.

12. Some take this verse to be a parenthesis inserted by St. Luke for sake of clearness; others, with less probability, think it a continuation of the words of our Lord. —

13. Ananias was much surprised that our Lord should ask him to go to so great a persecutor of the faithful in Jerusalem, and one who had come to Damascus for the express purpose of continuing his persecutions of the "saints," as the Christians were commonly called.

15. **A vessel of election**; i.e., a chosen instrument to carry the Gospel to the whole world. *Vas electionis* of the Vulgate is a Hebraism meaning *chosen instrument*. The Jews were not excluded from Paul's labor and preaching, but his chief work was among the Gentiles. By **kings** were perhaps meant Agrippa, Felix, Festus, and Nero.

16. **He must suffer**, etc. See 2 Cor. xi. 23-29; xii. 10; Col. i. 24, where we find described some of the Apostle's sufferings.

18. The sudden cure of St. Paul's blindness shows that it was miraculous. **He was baptized**. Baptism is necessary for membership in the Church of Christ and for eternal salvation. The neces-

19. And when he had taken meat, he was strengthened. And he was with the disciples that were at Damascus, for some days.

sary instruction which should precede it was given, in St. Paul's case, by our Lord Himself (Gal. i. 11, 12).

19. He was with the disciples, etc.; i.e., with the Christians who were in Damascus. St. Paul at this time remained only a few days at Damascus, and then went into Arabia, where he stayed for a while (Gal. i. 17, 18). Returning later to Damascus, he tarried there for some time before undertaking his first journey to Jerusalem. This visit to Jerusalem was three years after his conversion. St. Luke omits all mention of St. Paul's stay in Arabia, because it was not to his purpose; but he speaks in the present verse of the Saint's first visit to Damascus, and in verse 22 he is talking of the second one before going to Jerusalem.

It is vain for Weiss, Wendt, Weizaeher, and others to contend that St. Luke here (verses 19-28) and St. Paul, writing to the Galatians (Gal. i. 17, 18), are in contradiction. Neither of these inspired writers intended to give his readers a complete history of the events he touched upon, but only to group together those things which he deemed necessary and suitable to his purpose and scope. These latter being different, each writer, although treating of the same event, omits irrelevant details which the other gives. But while St. Luke has here omitted St. Paul's journey into Arabia and his sojourn there, he has not failed to give evidence that such an omission has been made. In the present verse the author speaks of St. Paul's stay in Damascus as covering only "some days," and of his preaching as surprising or "astonishing" the Jews; but in verses 22, 23 there is question of events that took place only after "many days had passed," and after which period of time St. Paul had "increased much in strength," and was not only surprising the Jews by his preaching, but was "confounding" them so much by his arguments that they were "consulting together to kill him." That St. Luke's "many days" (*ἡμέραι ἱκαναί*) may mean a long period must be admitted from his frequent use of the adjective *ἱκανός* in the sense of long duration. Cf. Luke viii. 27; xx. 9; Acts viii. 11; xiv. 3, 21; xviii. 18, etc. For similar use of "days" in the sense of a long period cf. 1 Paral. xxiii. 1, 28; 2 Paral. xxiv. 15; Job viii. 9; vii. 1; 3 Kings ii. 28; Prov. iii. 2, 16, etc.

20. And immediately he preached Jesus in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.

21. And all that heard him, were astonished, and said: Is not this he who persecuted in Jerusalem those that called upon this name: and came hither for that intent, that he might carry them bound to the chief priests?

22. But Saul increased much more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, affirming that this is the Christ.

23. And when many days were passed, the Jews consulted together to kill him.

24. But their laying in wait was made known to Saul. And they watched the gates also day and night, that they might kill him.

25. But the disciples taking him in the night, conveyed him away by the wall, letting him down in a basket.

Since, therefore, it is usual with the sacred writers to indicate longer periods of time by such expressions as "after many days," it is evident that a considerable space intervened between the "some days" and the surprising preaching of verses 19-21, and the "many days" and confounding preaching of verses 22, 23; to this longer intervening space, then, we are to ascribe St. Paul's retirement to Arabia and his three years' sojourn there before returning to Damascus.

20, 21. Immediately St. Paul began to declare to the Jews in the synagogues of Damascus that Christ was the Son of God and the promised Messiah. The Jews and Christians alike were astonished and could not understand the change so suddenly produced in one who, till then, had been the great enemy of the Christians, and had come to Damascus for the purpose of persecuting them there. Soon, however, he departed for Arabia, where in solitude he was instructed by Christ Himself in regard to the doctrine of the Gospel.

22. After his period of solitude and prayer in Arabia, during which he became more familiar with Christian doctrines, St. Paul revisited Damascus, and not only preached Christ to the Jews with great force, but combated them, answered their difficulties, reducing them to silence.

23. *Many days.* We do not know how long St. Paul was in Damascus on his second visit, but it was evidently a longer time than his first visit lasted. All we know is that between his conversion and his first journey to Jerusalem a space of about three years elapsed (Gal. i. 18).

24, 25. The city of Damascus was surrounded by a high wall

26. And when he was come into Jerusalem, he essayed to join himself to the disciples; and they all were afraid of him, not believing that he was a disciple.

27. But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles, and told them how he had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken to him; and how in Damascus he had dealt confidently in the name of Jesus.

28. And he was with them coming in and going out in Jerusalem, and dealing confidently in the name of the Lord.

29. He spoke also to the Gentiles, and disputed with the Greeks; but they sought to kill him.

30. Which when the brethren had known, they brought him down to Cæsa-rea, and sent him away to Tarsus.

through which were gates leading to and from the city. The soldiers of the prefect, who governed the city in the name of the king Aretas, guarded all the gates, so as to catch and kill the Apostle if he tried to escape. But the disciples, i.e., the Christians of Damascus, put St. Paul through a window in the wall and let him down on the outside in a basket, and thus he escaped (2 Cor. xi. 33) and went to Jerusalem.

26, 27. **They all were afraid.** It is certain that the conversion of St. Paul had been made known in Jerusalem, but during his long stay in Arabia people had likely ceased to think much about it. So when he did appear in their midst, announcing the fact and details of his conversion, the Christians were afraid to trust him. Barnabas, therefore, took him to the Apostles, Peter and James the Less (Gal. i. 18, 19). Barnabas was chosen as the intermediary between Paul and the Apostles, perhaps because he and Paul had formerly studied at the same school under Gamaliel, or more likely because they at one time had been close companions.

29. **He spoke also to the Gentiles.** These words are wanting in the Greek MSS. and in the best copies of the Vulgate. It is not likely that Paul preached to the Gentiles before the conversion of Cornelius by Peter. **With the Greeks;** i.e., with the Hellenist Jews, who would naturally be more inclined to St. Paul on account of his Cilician origin.

30. **The brethren;** i.e., the Christians, accompanied him to Cæsa-rea on the seacoast, whence he was to sail for Tarsus. It is, however, uncertain whether St. Paul made this journey by sea or by land.

31. Now the church had peace throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria; and was edified, walking in the fear of the Lord, and was filled with the consolation of the Holy Ghost.

32. And it came to pass that Peter, as he passed through, visiting all, came to the saints who dwelt at Lydda.

33. And he found there a certain man named Eneas, who had kept his bed for eight years, who was ill of the palsy.

34. And Peter said to him: Eneas, the Lord Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise, and make thy bed. And immediately he arose.

35. And all that dwelt at Lydda and Saron, saw him: who were converted to the Lord.

36. And in Joppe there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

31. **The Church had peace.** This peace in the three parts of Palestine west of the Jordan was not so much due to the conversion of St. Paul and his removal from Jerusalem, as to the disturbance among the Jews caused by the Emperor Caligua, who wished to have his statue put in the Temple of Jerusalem. This latter event came very near resulting in war, and so preoccupied the minds of the Jews that no time was left for persecuting the Christians (Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii. 7, 2; 8, 1 ff.; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 10, 1).

32. Peter had remained at Jerusalem during the persecutions of the Church, but now that there was peace, he, as head of the Church, made a visit to all the faithful of Palestine. **Lydda**, the ancient Lod, was called Diospolis by the Romans. It was situated in the plain of Sharon not far from the Mediterranean, about a day's journey northwest of Jerusalem. In ancient times it belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.

33, 34. From his name it would seem that Eneas was a Hellenist, and from the words of St. Peter to him we must conclude that he was a Christian.

35. **Saron**, or Sharon, was a fertile plain extending along the Mediterranean from Carmel to Joppe (Joppa).

36. **Joppe**, now called Jaffa, is the principal port of Palestine, and is situated about fifteen miles north of Lydda. **Dorcas** is the Greek for the Aramaic Tabitha, and means *gazelle*, a kind of goat, an antelope. Dorcas was famous among the Christians for her great charity.

37. And it came to pass in those days that she was sick, and died. Whom when they had washed, they laid her in an upper chamber.

38. And forasmuch as Lydda was nigh to Joppe, the disciples hearing that Peter was there, sent unto him two men, desiring him that he would not be slack to come unto them.

39. And Peter rising up, went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber. And all the widows stood about him weeping, and shewing him the coats and garments which Dorcas made them.

40. And they all being put forth, Peter kneeling down prayed, and turning to the body, he said: Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and seeing Peter, she sat up.

41. And giving her his hand, he lifted her up. And when he had called the saints and the widows, he presented her alive.

42. And it was made known throughout all Joppe; and many believed in the Lord.

43. And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppe, with one Simon a tanner.

37, 38. It was customary with the Jews to bury soon after death, but in the present instance the faithful, knowing that St. Peter was at Lydda near by, and that he was performing many miracles, placed the body of the dead charity-worker in an upper room of the house, and delayed the burial till they should see if Peter would not raise her to life.

39, 40. When Peter had arrived and come to the room where lay the corpse, the poor widows gathered around him, and showed him the coats and garments which Dorcas while living had made for them. Peter was moved by their tears and tender words, and, after the example of the Saviour on a similar occasion (Matt. ix. 24, 25), he put forth the crowd, lest they should disturb the prayer he was about to utter.

41. **The saints**; i.e., the Christians.

43. Some commentators think that Peter remained in Joppe some months. That he stayed with a tanner shows that he was no longer a slave to Rabbinical opinions and observances, because tanners among the Jews, on account of their contact with the skins of dead animals, were considered unclean and therefore to be avoided (Lev. xi. 39).



## CHAPTER X

CORNELIUS THE CENTURION IS INSTRUCTED BY AN  
ANGEL TO SEND FOR ST. PETER, 1-8.

ST. PETER'S VISION OF THE SHEET FROM HEAVEN,  
9-16.

ST. PETER VISITS CORNELIUS AT CAESAREA, 17-33.

ST. PETER INSTRUCTS CORNELIUS AND HIS HOUSE-  
HOLD, 34-43.

THE HOLY GHOST DESCENDS UPON CORNELIUS AND  
HIS HOUSEHOLD, AND THEY ARE BAPTIZED, 44-48.

1. And there was a certain man in Cæsarea, named Cornelius, a centurion of that which is called the Italian band;

2. A religious man, and fearing God with all his house, giving much alms to the people, and always praying to God.

3. This man saw in a vision manifestly, about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him: Cornelius.

4. And he, beholding him, being seized with fear, said: What is it, Lord? And he said to him: Thy prayers and thy alms are ascended for a memorial in the sight of God.

1. **Caesarea.** See on viii. 40.

**Cornelius** most probably belonged to the *gens Cornelia*, and was therefore a convert from one of the most distinguished Roman families. A **centurion** was the commander of a hundred men. A **band** or cohort was a tenth part of a legion, and so consisted of about six hundred men. The Roman Governor of Palestine resided at Caesarea, and for his greater security the band or cohort of this city was made up of soldiers drawn, not from the provinces, but from Italy; hence it was called Italian.

2. **A religious man**, etc. Although a pagan, Cornelius had a knowledge of the true God, and led a life devoted to charity and good works. His good example was imitated by his whole family. It was his piety toward God and his charity toward his neighbor that obtained for Cornelius and his family a knowledge of the one true faith.

3, 4. While Cornelius was praying, about three o'clock in the

5. And now send men to Joppe, and call hither one Simon, who is surnamed Peter :

6. He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. He will tell thee what thou must do.

7. And when the angel who spoke to him was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a soldier who feared the Lord, of them that were under him.

8. To whom when he had related all, he sent them to Joppe.

9. And on the next day, whilst they were going on their journey, and drawing nigh to the city, Peter went up to the higher parts of the house to pray, about the sixth hour.

10. And being hungry, he was desirous to taste somewhat. And as they were preparing, there came upon him an ecstasy of mind.

11. And he saw the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great linen sheet let down by the four corners from heaven to the earth :

12. Wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts, and creeping things of the earth, and fowls of the air.

afternoon, an angel, taking a bodily appearance, appeared and told him that his prayers and alms-deeds had been rising to God like a sweet-smelling sacrifice, which kept him, as it were, ever in the mind of the Almighty.

5. Joppe was about forty miles south of Caesarea, a journey of about twelve hours.

7. The servants and the soldiers perhaps set out for Joppe about 4 P.M., and took lodging for the night somewhere along the road.

9. **Peter went up**, etc. This was about noon, "the sixth hour," which was an hour for prayer among the Jews. The roofs of houses in Palestine were flat, and it was customary with the Jews often to go to the roofs, where they could give themselves to more quiet and undisturbed recollection and prayer.

10. **Preparing**; i.e., cooking and making ready the meal. **An ecstasy** means a state in which one is carried outside the senses, and supernaturally elevated in spirit, so as to be able to contemplate and understand the objects which God makes known to the soul.

11, 12. The vessel which Peter saw was a linen sheet tied above at the four corners, so as to prevent the contents from falling out. It contained all kinds of animals, clean and unclean, tame and wild, those which could be eaten and those which could not be legally eaten by the Jews, all mixed together without distinction.

13. And there came a voice to him: Arise, Peter; kill and eat.

14. But Peter said: Far be it from me; for I never did eat any thing that is common and unclean.

15. And the voice spoke to him again the second time: That which God hath cleansed, do not thou call common.

16. And this was done thrice; and presently the vessel was taken up into heaven.

17. Now, whilst Peter was doubting within himself, what the vision that he had seen should mean, behold the men who were sent from Cornelius, inquiring for Simon's house, stood at the gate.

18. And when they had called, they asked, if Simon, who is surnamed Peter, were lodged there.

19. And as Peter was thinking of the vision, the Spirit said to him: Behold three men seek thee.

20. Arise, therefore, get thee down and go with them, doubting nothing: for I have sent them.

21. Then Peter, going down to the men, said: Behold, I am he whom you seek; what is the cause for which you are come?

22. Who said: Cornelius, a centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and having good testimony from all the nation of the Jews, received an answer of an holy angel, to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

13-17. Up to this present moment Peter had rigorously observed the distinction between foods that were considered clean and unclean, or common, among the Jews. But now the voice from heaven told him that that which comes down from above, or that which God commands to be eaten, cannot be unclean, common, impure. From this Peter should understand that the ancient law regarding foods clean and unclean was no longer binding; and presently he should likewise understand that the time had arrived in which it was the will of God that the Gentiles were to be freely admitted into the Church of Christ without being subjected to circumcision or the other Jewish observances. Peter did not comprehend the full import of his vision until the corresponding vision of Cornelius was made known to him.

19. **The spirit;** i.e., the Holy Ghost, who was directing and guiding Peter.

20. **Doubting nothing.** Humanly speaking there was reason to fear that Peter might hesitate to receive or hear these men who were sent to him, because they were Gentiles. Hence the Holy Spirit assured Peter that He had sent these messengers, and that they, therefore, should be received without doubt or hesitation.

23. Then bringing them in, he lodged them. And the day following he arose, and went with them: and some of the brethren from Joppe accompanied him.

24. And the morrow after, he entered into Cæsarea. And Cornelius waited for them, having called together his kinsmen and special friends.

25. And it came to pass, that when Peter was come in, Cornelius came to meet him, and falling at his feet adored.

26. But Peter lifted him up, saying: Arise, I myself also am a man.

27. And talking with him, he went in, and found many that were come together.

28. And he said to them: You know how abominable it is for a man that is a Jew, to keep company or to come unto one of another nation: but God hath shewed to me, to call no man common or unclean.

23. **Some of the brethren;** i.e., some of the converted Jews. Peter wanted these brethren as witnesses of his action, foreseeing that the Jews would criticize him.

24. **The morrow after,** which was the fourth day after the vision of Cornelius (verse 30). From this verse it seems there were not a few besides Cornelius who believed as he did.

25. **Falling at his feet adored.** It was customary with the Orientals thus to honor one of superior dignity; but for a Roman official to pay such respect to a Jew was indeed extraordinary. It was because Cornelius recognized in Peter a friend of God, vested with supernatural powers.

26. **I myself also am a man.** Peter did not consider himself worthy of such great respect. It is to be noted that our Lord, who was God as well as man, never remonstrated with those who paid Him extraordinary honor. He never, like the Apostles, said, "I also am only a man."

28. **How abominable,**—rather, "how illicit, forbidden (*ὡς ἀθέμιτον*). Not to enter the houses of Gentiles, or eat with them, was a rigid practice of the Jews, although there was no express law to this effect in the Pentateuch. And yet if anyone did violate this strict custom, he was considered thereby legally defiled. Cf. John xviii. 28; Mark vii. 2; Gal. ii. 12. **God hath shewed to me,** etc. For the sake of the Jews who had accompanied him, as well as for the sake of the friends of Cornelius, Peter declares that in visiting Gentiles he is fulfilling a command which he has received from God.

29. For which cause, making no doubt, I came when I was sent for. I ask, therefore, for what cause you have sent for me?

30. And Cornelius said: Four days ago, unto this hour, I was praying in my house, at the ninth hour, and behold a man stood before me in white apparel, and said:

31 Cornelius, thy prayer is heard, and thy alms are had in remembrance in the sight of God.

32. Send therefore to Joppe, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter: he lodgeth in the house of Simon a tanner, by the sea side. . .

33. Immediately therefore I sent to thee: and thou hast done well in coming. Now therefore all we are present in thy sight, to hear all things whatsoever are commanded thee by the Lord.

34. And Peter opening his mouth, said: In very deed I perceive, that God is not a respecter of persons.

35. But in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh justice, is acceptable to him.

36. God sent the word to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all.)

37. You know the word which hath been published through all Judea: for it began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached,

38. Jesus of Nazareth: how God anointed him with the Holy Ghost, and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him.

39. And we are witnesses of all things that he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed, hanging him upon a tree.

40. Him God raised up the third day, and gave him to be made manifest.

29. I ask therefore, for what cause, etc. Peter already knew from the soldiers who had come to him (verse 22) why Cornelius had sent for him; but now, that the Jews who were present might themselves see the piety and hear of the vision of Cornelius, he asked the centurion himself to explain what he desired.

34, 35. In these verses Peter declares that difference of nationality among peoples is of no weight with God, and that all, Jews or Gentiles, are equally acceptable to Him, provided they be equally just and right-living.

36, 38. The meaning, in brief, of these verses, as gathered from the Greek, is this: You know the Gospel of salvation and redemption which God, through Jesus Christ (the Lord of all), sent first to the Jewish people, which has been published through all Judea, beginning with Galilee, after John's baptism,—you know, I mean that the word, the announcement, was made by Jesus of Nazareth, whom God anointed with the Holy Ghost and with power, etc. Peter wishes to say that the salvation and redemption

41. Not to all the people, but to witnesses preordained by God, even to **us**, who did eat and drink with him after he arose again from the dead;

42. And he commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is he who was appointed by God, to be judge of the living and of the dead.

43. To him all the prophets give testimony, that by **his name** all receive remission of sins, who believe in him.

which Christ brought to the world was for all, Jews and Gentiles, and that Cornelius, living at Caesarea, not far away, must have heard of the preaching and miracles of the Saviour.

**How God anointed him.** Anointing was a ceremony used in the inauguration of kings and prophets, and in the consecration of priests. It signified the communication of power and authority. Christ, as man, was anointed with the Holy Ghost in the first moment of His incarnation; that is to say, by force of the hypostatic union of the human and divine natures in Christ, the sacred humanity of our Lord, from the first moment of His incarnation, possessed the fulness of the graces and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

41. From this verse we learn that God chose beforehand the witnesses of the truth of our Lord's Resurrection. To be a witness of so great an event was not the privilege of those who had been perverse and stubborn in rejecting the light, but of that limited number who were more worthy.

42. **Of the living and of the dead.** It was the teaching of some of the Greek Fathers that the just who will be alive at the end of the world shall not die, but shall be changed without death. The common opinion, however, is that all shall die. The term "living," therefore, here means those who will be alive just before the coming of Christ.

43. **All the prophets; i.e.,** many of them, such as Jeremias, Isaias, Ezechiel, etc., or all of them, either directly or indirectly, bore testimony to Christ, and affirmed that His salvation should be for all, Jews and Gentiles, and that all could participate in the fruits of the redemption provided they believed in Jesus Christ. Peter, therefore, to prepare Cornelius and his household for the grace of Baptism, gives a brief outline (verses 37-43) of the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ, and of the conditions necessary whereby both Jews and Gentiles may have part in the redemption wrought by Jesus.

44. While Peter was yet speaking these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.

45. And the faithful of the circumcision, who came with Peter, were astonished, for that the grace of the Holy Ghost was poured out upon the Gentiles also.

46. For they heard them speaking with tongues, and magnifying God.

47. Then Peter answered: Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?

48. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Then they desired him to tarry with them some days.

44, 45. In confirmation of the truth of Peter's words the Holy Ghost descended upon Cornelius and all whom he had invited to his house. The converted Jews who were present were astonished that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit should be thus suddenly poured out on Gentiles. But by this visible prodigy God wished to show that it was not necessary for pagans to pass through Judaism and the observances of the Mosaic Law before being admitted to the Church of Christ. Hence the six Jewish Christians who had accompanied Peter could see plainly that it was God's will that the old lines which had separated Jews and Gentiles should be obliterated forever.

47. Since God by the outpouring of His Holy Spirit upon these Gentiles had clearly shown that they were to be treated on equal footing with the Jews, what objection could there be to giving them Baptism? Perhaps Peter asked this question for the sake of the converted Jews who were present, who, however, seem to have manifested no opposition.

48. The Baptism was doubtless administered by those who had accompanied Peter, as it was customary with the Apostles to leave this work to other ministers (1 Cor. i. 17). Although these converts had already received the Holy Ghost, Baptism was still necessary for them to be made formal members of the Church. **In the name, etc.** See on ii. 37-39.

## CHAPTER XI

ST. PETER DEFENDS HIS ACTIONS, 1-18.

THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL TO ANTIOCH, 19-21.

ST. BARNABAS AND ST. PAUL AT ANTIOCH, 22-26.

THE FAMINE AND THE CHARITY OF THE FIRST CHRISTIANS, 27-30.

1. And the apostles and brethren, who were in Judea, heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

2. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3. Saying: Why didst thou go in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them?

4. But Peter began and declared to them the matter in order, saying:

5. I was in the city of Joppe praying, and I saw in an ecstasy of mind a vision, a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet let down from heaven by four corners, and it came even unto me.

6. Into which looking, I considered, and saw fourfooted creatures of the earth, and beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

7. And I heard also a voice saying to me: Arise, Peter; kill and eat.

8. And I said: Not so, Lord; for nothing common or unclean hath ever entered into my mouth.

9. And the voice answered again from heaven: What God hath made clean, do not thou call common.

10. And this was done three times: and all were taken up again into heaven.

11. And behold, immediately there were three men come to the house wherein I was, sent to me from Cæsarea.

12. And the Spirit said to me, that I should go with them, nothing doubting. And these six brethren went with me also: and we entered into the man's house.

13. And he told us how he had seen an angel in his house, standing, and saying to him: Send to Joppe, and call hither Simon, who is surnamed Peter,

14. Who shall speak to thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, and all thy house.

1-14. The news of what had taken place in the case of Cornelius and his household had spread to the Apostles and to the faithful scattered over Judea. When Peter, therefore, went up to Jerusalem, those who were of the circumcision, i.e., those converted from Judaism to Christianity, who believed that all converts from pagan-



15. And when I had begun to speak, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, as upon us also in the beginning.

16. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how that he said: John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.

17. If then God gave them the same grace, as to us also who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ; who was I, that could withstand God?

18. Having heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying: God then hath also to the Gentiles given repentance unto life.

19. Now they who had been dispersed by the persecution that arose on occasion of Stephen, went about as far as Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, speaking the word to none, but to the Jews only.

ism should be made to submit to circumcision and certain purifications and observe the Mosaic Law and its ceremonies, began to remonstrate with him because he had received into the Church Gentiles on a level with Jews, not requiring them to be circumcised and to observe the other Jewish rites. But Peter justified his mode of acting by explaining that he had simply done for those Gentiles what God had ordered him to do. He therefore explains to his critics (verses 5-16) the vision he had received.

15. In the beginning; i.e., on the day of Pentecost, when the Apostles began their ministry.

16. See above, on i. 5, also on Matthew iii. 11.

17. By pouring out on those pagans the very same Holy Spirit with His gifts which the Apostles had received, God showed that there was no distinction to be made between converts from paganism and those from Judaism. If, then, God did not distinguish, why should Peter?

18. Peter's argument and explanation were sufficient; and those who had objected now glorified the wisdom and mercy of God which had given to the Gentiles also the grace of conversion to the true faith. Some of the Jews, however, later raised the same difficulties (xv).

19. St. Luke now resumes the narrative interrupted at viii. 4, where he had begun to give the history and the events connected with the disciples who had been dispersed on the occasion of St. Stephen's martyrdom.

**Phenice** or **Phoenicia** was the narrow strip of land bordering on the Mediterranean to the northwest of Palestine. It extended from Carmel on the south to the river Eleutherus (Nahr-el-Keber) on the north, and was part of the Roman province of Syria. Its chief

20. But some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were entered into Antioch, spoke also to the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believing, were converted to the Lord.

22. And the tidings came to the ears of the church that was at Jerusalem, touching these things: and they sent Barnabas as far as Antioch.

23. Who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, rejoiced: and he exhorted them all with purpose of heart to continue in the Lord.

24. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. And a great multitude was added to the Lord.

25. And Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul: whom, when he had found, he brought to Antioch.

26. And they conversed there in the church a whole year; and they taught a great multitude, so that at Antioch the disciples were first named Christians.

cities were Tyre and Sidon. **Cyprus**, the island in the Mediterranean west of Phoenicia, was at this time a center of great commercial importance. **Antioch** was the capital of Syria situated on the river Orontes. It was the gateway to the East, and the residence of the Proconsul of Syria. For a time it was the center of the Christian community converted from paganism. **Speaking the word**; i.e., the Gospel.

20. Some of the Christians who were dispersed by the persecution were Hellenists from Cyprus and Cyrene, i.e., Jews who had been born and brought up among the pagans. As soon as these had heard of the happenings at Caesarea they began to preach the Gospel to the Greeks (*Έλληνες*, according to the best MSS.) at Antioch.

22. **Barnabas**, who was a native of Cyprus and consequently a Hellenist. He knew better than a native-born Jew how to deal with Gentile converts.

25, 26. After encountering trouble at Jerusalem, Paul retired to Tarsus, his native city. Barnabas knew of Paul's conversion and the mission which God had given him, and so he made a three days' journey from Antioch to Tarsus, found Paul and brought him to Antioch. There Paul and Barnabas labored for a whole year, instructing and converting the pagans to Christianity. So great was the number of these pagan converts that they soon formed a society distinct from the Jews whose center was the Synagogue, and to this new society, professing the religion of Christ, was given for

27. And in these days there came prophets from Jerusalem to Antioch :

28. And one of them named Agabus, rising up, signified by the Spirit, that there should be a great famine over the whole world, which came to pass under Claudius.

29. And the disciples, every man according to his ability, purposed to send relief to the brethren who dwelt in Judea :

30. Which also they did, sending it to the ancients, by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

the first time the name **Christians**, i.e., followers of Christ and His doctrine.

27. **In these days**; i.e., while Paul and Barnabas were laboring at Antioch. **Prophets**; i.e., pious faithful who had received from the Holy Ghost the gift of foretelling future events. Many of the faithful in the early years of the Church enjoyed this gift. Cf. 1 Cor. xii. 10, 28, 29; xiii. 2, 8.

28. **Over the whole world**; i.e., over the whole Roman Empire. The Emperor Claudius reigned from A.D. 41-54. Many famines afflicted the Empire during his reign, and Judea was especially afflicted by a famine in A.D. 45. Cf. Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. 2, 5; Tacitus, *Ann.* xii. 43; Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* ii. 11. Nothing further is known of Agabus, except what is recorded in xxi. 10, 11.

29. **The disciples**; i.e., the Christians of Antioch, whom the famine was probably not affecting at that time, "proposed to send relief," etc.

30. **To the ancients**, πρὸς τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους; i.e., to those who had been especially ordained and delegated by the Apostles to govern the various churches, to preach, administer the sacraments, etc. See xiv. 22; xx. 17; xxi. 18; 1 Tim. v. 17; Titus i. 5. In early times the term "ancients" was applied to priests and to Bishops, but later it was given to priests only. The alms were sent to the priests and not to the Apostles on this occasion, most likely because none of the latter was in Jerusalem at the time. This was St. Paul's second journey to Jerusalem after his conversion.

## CHAPTER XII

THE MARTYRDOM OF ST. JAMES THE GREATER, 1, 2.

THE IMPRISONMENT AND LIBERATION OF ST. PETER,  
3-19.

THE DEATH OF HEROD AGRIPPA, 20-25.

1. And at the same time, Herod the king stretched forth his hands, to afflict some of the church.

2. And he killed James, the brother of John, with the sword.

3. And seeing that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to take up Peter also. Now it was in the days of the Azymes.

4. And when he had apprehended him, he cast him into prison, delivering him to four files of soldiers to be kept, intending, after the pasch, to bring him forth to the people.

1. **Herod the king**; i.e., Herod Agrippa the Elder, son of Aristobulus, grandson of Herod the Great, and nephew of Herod Antipas who mocked our Lord by clothing Him in a white robe. Herod Agrippa became very friendly at Rome with the Emperor Caligula, by whom he was first made tetrarch of Iturea and Abilene, and later of Galilee also, when Herod Antipas was banished by the Emperor to Lyons. It was at this time that he received the title of king. Judea, too, was afterwards added to his kingdom by the Emperor Claudius, and he was thus king of all these regions at the time here referred to by St. Luke.

**To afflict some, etc.**, in order to gain favor with the Jews.

2. **James, the Greater**, the son of Zebedee and Salome and brother of John the Evangelist. He was beheaded, the first of the Apostles to shed his blood for the faith. To put to death with the sword was not a Jewish, but a Roman form of execution.

3. **Peter**, who was the recognized head of the Church. **The days of the azymes**; i.e., the days of unleavened bread, or of the Pasch and its octave. See on Matthew xxvi. 17 ff.

4. **Four files**; i.e., four sets of four soldiers each. For the sake of greater vigilance these four sets of soldiers relieved one another every three hours. Of each set two soldiers guarded the door of

5. Peter therefore was kept in prison. But prayer was made without ceasing by the church unto God for him.

6. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.

7. And behold an angel of the Lord stood by him: and a light shined in the room: and he striking Peter on the side, raised him up, saying: Arise quickly. And the chains fell off from his hands.

8. And the angel said to him: Gird thyself, and put on thy sandals. And he did so. And he said to him: Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.

9. And going out, he followed him, and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel: but thought he saw a vision.

10. And passing through the first and the second ward, they came to the iron gate that leadeth to the city, which of itself opened to them. And going out, they passed on through one street: and immediately the angel departed from him.

11. And Peter coming to himself, said: Now I know in very deed, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

the prison, and two remained within the prison chained to the prisoner.

**After the pasch**, etc. The Paschal time was very sacred with the Jews, and no trials of criminals were supposed to take place while it lasted.

5. **Prayer was made**, etc. The earnestness and fidelity with which the faithful offered their prayers for Peter showed how they recognized him as the head of the Church.

6. **Bound with two chains**. It was the Roman custom to bind together the prisoner and the soldiers with chains; the prisoner's right hand was bound to the left of one soldier, and his left hand to the right of the other (*Senec. Epist. v. 6*).

7. **A light shined**, etc. Only Peter saw the light, the soldiers being in a deep sleep.

8. **Gird thyself**. The girdle was worn around the tunic or undergarment, except during time of sleep. The **garment** was a cloak, which was also put aside during sleep.

9. Peter was so bewildered and stupefied that the whole happening seemed a dream to him.

10. **The first and the second ward**; i.e., the first and second guards of soldiers; the first guarded the door or gate of the prison, and the second exercised vigilance over other parts of the building.

12. And considering, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, who was surnamed Mark, where many were gathered together and praying.

13. And when he knocked at the door of the gate, a damsel came to hearken, whose name was Rhode.

14. And as soon as she knew Peter's voice, she opened not the gate for joy, but running in she told that Peter stood before the gate.

15. But they said to her: Thou art mad. But she affirmed that it was so. Then said they: It is his angel.

16. But Peter continued knocking. And when they had opened, they saw him, and were astonished.

17. But he beckoning to them with his hand to hold their peace, told how the Lord had brought him out of prison, and he said: Tell these things to James, and to the brethren. And going out, he went into another place.

18. Now when day was come, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter.

19. And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not; having examined the keepers, he commanded they should be put to death; and going down from Judea to Cæsarea, he abode there.

**The iron gate** was the one that opened out on the city. No one noticed Peter as he escaped.

12. **John . . . Mark**, who is commonly believed to have been St. Mark the Evangelist.

13-15. How natural this narration really is! It was night, and the faithful in the house were praying for Peter. The servant, hearing the knocking, went to the door and, without opening it, recognized the voice of the head of the Church. She hastened back to tell the others, who would not believe so extraordinary a happening. They said: "It is his angel," which is a proof that the first Christians believed that each person has his guardian angel, as our Lord before had said (Matt. xviii. 10).

17. **To James**; i.e., James the Less, Bishop of Jerusalem; he was the son of Alpheus.

**He went into another place.** Most probably these words indicate the departure of Peter from the dominions of Agrippa. From the Fathers and ancient writers it seems that he went first to Antioch, where he founded his first See, and then to Rome, where he founded his Primatial See. His residence at Antioch was probably only long enough to found a See there, but he is said to have been Bishop of Rome for twenty-five years. Hence according to tradition, which is in agreement with the narrative of the Acts, St. Peter left Palestine for Antioch about A.D. 41 or 42,

20. And he was angry with the Tyrians and the Sidonians. But they with one accord came to him, and having gained Blastus, who was the king's chamberlain, they desired peace, because their countries were nourished by him.

21. And upon a day appointed, Herod being arrayed in kingly apparel, sat in the judgment seat, and made an oration to them.

22. And the people made acclamation, saying: It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.

23. And forthwith an angel of the Lord struck him, because he had not given the honour to God: and being eaten up by worms, he gave up the ghost.

24. But the word of the Lord increased and multiplied.

twelve years after the Ascension. After staying at Antioch long enough to establish a See he went to Rome, and was Bishop there till A.D. 67 or 68, when he was crucified by Nero. As Peter was present at the Council of Jerusalem, about A.D. 51, it is supposed that he returned from Rome to Palestine for a visit about that time. Cf. Knabenbauer, *Comm. in Actus Apos.*; Le Camus, *L'Œuvre des Apôtres*, tom. i, p. 317 ff.; Crelier, *La Sainte Bible*, *Les Actes des Apôtres*; Sales, *La Sacra Bibbia*, vol. i.

**Put to death.** According to Roman law a soldier who should allow a prisoner to escape was to be condemned to the same punishment which the prisoner would have suffered. After the festival of the Pasch, during which Herod was in Jerusalem, he returned to Caesarea, the capital of his kingdom.

20. **Tyrians and the Sidonians;** i.e., the Phoenicians, whose principal towns were Tyre and Sidon. Phoenicia was doubtless feeling the pinch of famine, and as her people usually depended on Palestine for supplies of corn and other foods they were anxious to regain the friendship of Herod.

21. **A day appointed,** which was the second day of the games celebrated at Caesarea by Herod in honor of the Emperor Claudius, who had made Agrippa king of all Palestine (Josephus, *Antiq.* xix. 8, 2). **The judgment seat** was an elevated seat or platform in the theater, or place of the games, at Caesarea.

22. **The voice of a god.** Josephus (*l. c.*) tells us they said: "Be merciful to us, for hitherto we have considered you to be a man, but from now on we know you are a god." Those who spoke thus were evidently the heathens, who were accustomed to pay divine honors to sovereigns. Josephus (*l. c.*) further says that "he (Herod) neither rebuked the people, nor rejected their impious flattery."

23. **He gave up the ghost.** Josephus tells us that as soon as

25. And Barnabas and Saul returned from Jerusalem, having fulfilled their ministry, taking with them John, who was surnamed Mark.

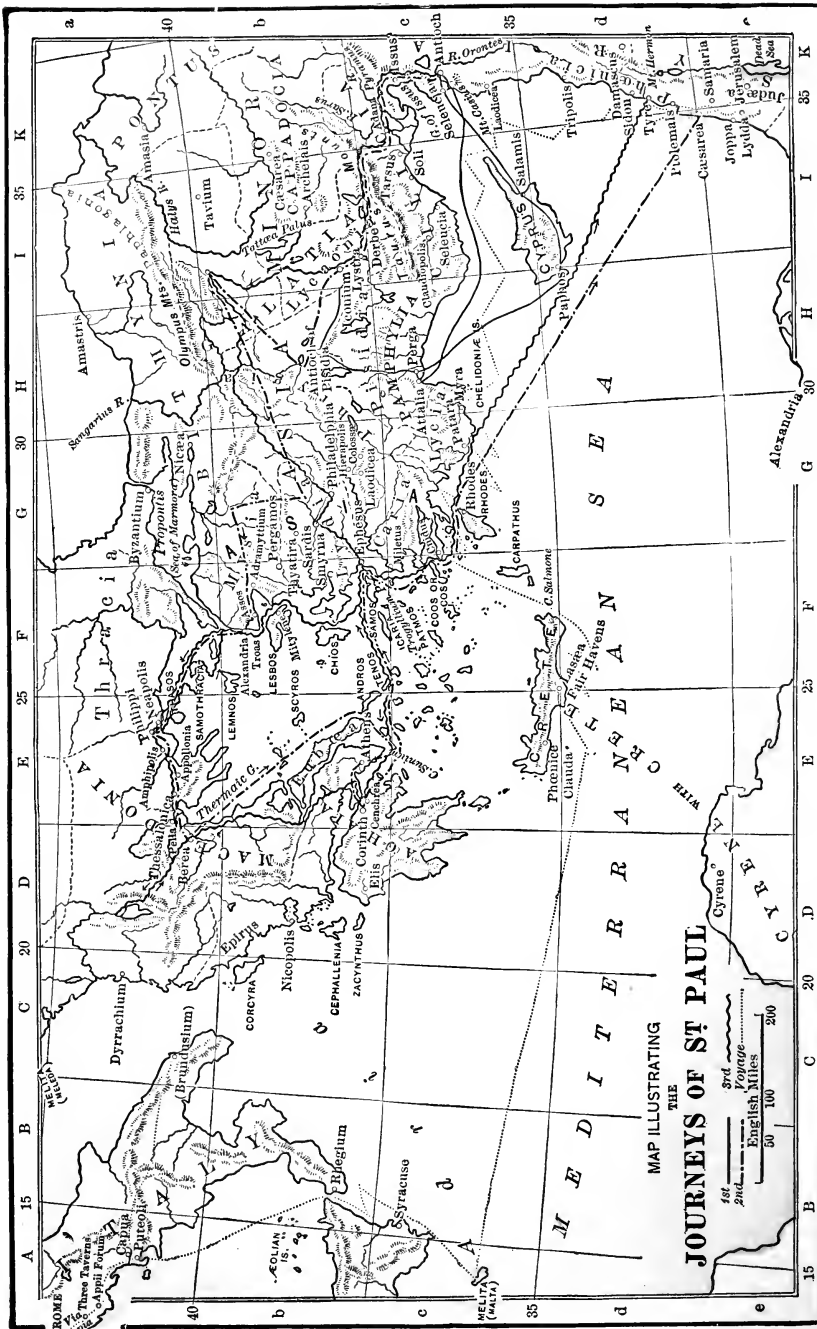
Herod had accepted the honor which was not his due, he was stricken with severe pain in the bowels and in the head, and died five days later at the age of fifty-four, after a reign of seven years and some months. Herod's death occurred in the fourth year of Claudius, or A.D. 44. The narrative of St. Luke here agrees perfectly with that of Josephus.

**Eaten up by worms.** The fate of this first persecutor of the Church was similar to that of the profaner of the Temple, Antiochus Epiphanes (2 Machab. ix. 5-9). Josephus does not state minutely the nature of Herod's disease beyond saying that it was dysentery, which was probably caused by intestinal worms, as St. Luke here intimates. After the death of Herod Palestine again became a part of the Roman province of Syria, and was governed by procurators.

25. Paul and Barnabas had come to Jerusalem with alms to succor the faithful there distressed by famine, and now that their work was finished they returned to Antioch.







MAP ILLUSTRATING

THE

# JOURNEYS OF ST PAUL

1st Voyage  
2nd Voyage  
3rd Voyage

English Miles  
0 50 100 200

## CHAPTER XIII

THE ORDINATION OF SAUL AND BARNABAS, 1-3.

THEIR MISSION TO CYPRUS; THE CONVERSION OF THE  
PROCONSUL, SERGIUS PAULUS, 4-12.

THEY SAIL FROM PAPHOS TO PERGE, AND GO TO  
ANTIOCH IN PISIDIA, WHERE PAUL PREACHES IN  
THE SYNAGOGUE, 13-41.

THE FRUITS OF THE PREACHING OF PAUL AND BAR-  
NABAS, 42-52.

1. Now there were in the church which was at Antioch, prophets and doctors, among whom was Barnabas, and Simon who was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manahen, who was the foster brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul.

2. And as they were ministering to the Lord, and fasting, the Holy Ghost said to them: Separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have taken them.

### 1. At Antioch, the capital of Syria.

**Prophets and doctors.** Prophets were persons inspired by God and endowed with the special gift of knowing the future and things hidden. God often made known His will through these agents. Doctors possessed the gift of instructing others in the truths of faith. As a rule these two gifts of prophecy and teaching were not found in the same person; but there were exceptions.

**Barnabas** had been sent by the Apostles to organize the Church at Antioch (xi. 22). **Simon . . . Niger**, so called, perhaps, on account of his complexion. **Lucius of Cyrene.** Cyrene was the principal city of Libya in northern Africa. **Manahen** was perhaps the son of an Essene prophet of the same name who had foretold the future greatness of Herod the Great. Herod out of gratitude probably took the prophet's son, called him also Manahen, and had him raised and educated in his palace together with Herod Antipas, hence he was called the foster brother of Herod. Nothing further is known about these last three prophets.

### 2. Ministering to the Lord, etc.; i.e., giving public worship to

3. Then they, fasting and praying, and imposing their hands upon them, sent them away.

God, and celebrating the sacred mysteries of the Eucharist. The word *λειτουργούντων*, *ministering*, formerly signified the worship given to God in the Tabernacle or in the Temple, but is here used to express the public worship of the Christians, the center of which was the Eucharistic Sacrifice. Hence St. Luke says: *λειτουργούντων τῷ Κυρίῳ*. From this same Greek word is derived the word "Liturgy," which is chiefly applied to the rites pertaining to the Holy Sacrifice.

From early times "fasting" accompanied the Eucharistic celebration, at least in some places, as we learn from this verse. A contrary practice, however, seems to have prevailed for a time at Corinth (1 Cor. xi. 20 ff.). When the custom of fasting before Communion became universal we do not know.

**Separate me**, etc. The Holy Ghost demanded that Saul and Barnabas should, by a special consecration, be separated from the rest of the faithful, in order that they might be able to fulfill the special work for which God had chosen them, namely, the conversion of the Gentiles (ix. 15; Rom. i. 1; Gal. i. 16). To **separate**, or set apart, for God means in Scripture to remove from all profane occupation and consecrate entirely to the service of the Almighty. Cf. Num. xviii. 24; Ezech. xlv. i. 13.

3. **Fasting and praying, and imposing their hands**, etc. By these acts Paul and Barnabas were consecrated Bishops. This is the common opinion among Catholic theologians and exegetes, and it is followed by some Protestants. The two Apostles were doubtless priests already, although the priesthood and episcopal consecration were sometimes conferred together in the early Church (Petavius). At any rate, it is certain that this imposition of hands, preceded by prayer and fasting, was not a mere simple ceremony or blessing apart from real sacred consecration. Everywhere in the New Testament, except where our Lord laid His hands on the little children to bless them (Matt. xix. 15), the imposition of the hands always means the conferring or exercise of special power, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, consecrating for the service of God. See Matt. ix. 18; Mark v. 23; xvi. 18; Luke iv. 40; Acts vi. 6; viii. 17; ix. 12, 17; xxviii. 8; 1 Tim. iv. 14; v. 22; 2 Tim. i. 6.

4. So they being sent by the Holy Ghost, went to Seleucia: and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.

5. And when they were come to Salamina, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. And they had John also in the ministry.

6. And when they had gone through the whole island, as far as Paphos, they found a certain man, a magician, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Bar-jesu:

7. Who was with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a prudent man. He sending for Barnabas and Saul, desired to hear the word of God.

It is uncertain who the Bishop or Bishops were that consecrated Paul and Barnabas. Some think they were the three Doctors named above, verse 1, who had themselves been consecrated by the Apostles. According to others some one of the Apostles came to Antioch to consecrate the two missionaries.

4. With this verse begins the second general division of the Acts. Up to this they have treated chiefly of the *doings* of St. Peter, but from now on St. Paul will be the central figure; his first missionary journey begins here and occupies the rest of the present and all of the following chapter. St. Paul's first missionary journey lasted about four years, A.D. 45-49.

By the Holy Ghost. St. Luke takes care to note that the mission of the two Apostles was from the Holy Spirit, and not from men. Went to Seleucia, the port of Antioch, and about 20 miles to the west. They sailed from Seleucia to the island of Cyprus, landing at Salamina or Salamis.

5, 6. Passing through the whole of the island they came to Paphos, its chief town at the western extremity of the island, about 140 miles from Salamina. John Mark, the author of the Second Gospel and relative of Barnabas, was with them, assisting in preaching, baptizing, etc.

A magician . . . Bar-Jesu. Magic and sorcery were much practiced at this time among the Jews, as we learn from the Talmud. Bar-Jesu means *son of Josue*, or *Saviour*, a name quite common among the Jews. He was a "false prophet," deceiving many by pretending to know the divine will and future events.

7. The proconsul Sergius Paulus. This statement shows the accuracy of St. Luke's historical knowledge. The Emperor Augustus divided the province of the Empire into two classes,—those that were governed by himself personally, through legates or *proprae-*

8. But Elymas the magician (for so his name is interpreted) withstood them, seeking to turn away the proconsul from the faith.

9. Then Saul, otherwise Paul, filled with the Holy Ghost, looking upon him,

10. Said: O full of all guile, and of all deceit, child of the devil, enemy of all justice, thou ceapest not to pervert the right ways of the Lord.

11. And now behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a time. And immediately there fell a mist and darkness upon him, and going about, he sought some one to lead him by the hand.

12. Then the proconsul, when he had seen what was done, believed, admiring at the doctrine of the Lord.

13. Now when Paul and they that were with him had sailed from Paphos, they came to Perge in Pamphylia. And John departing from them, returned to Jerusalem.

14. But they passing through Perge, came to Antioch in Pisidia: and entered people when they were sojourners in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm

15. And after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying: Ye men, brethren, if you have any word of exhortation to make to the people, speak.

tors; and those that were governed by the Senate, through proconsuls. At first the island of Cyprus belonged to the first class (Strabo, xvii. 25), but later (A.D. 22) it was given over to the Senate with a proconsul as its governor (Dion Cassius, liv. 4), as St. Luke here affirms.

8. Elymas, an Arabic name meaning a *wise man*, much the same as *magus*.

9. Saul, otherwise Paul. *Saul* was his Hebrew name, and *Paul* his Roman cognomen. St. Jerome (*De Viris illust.* v) thinks that Saul took *Paul* as his name in memory of his great spiritual triumph in converting the distinguished proconsul to the faith. But as the Apostle was after this to labor much among the Latins, it seems that this might more probably have been the reason for changing his Hebrew name into Latin. Hereafter St. Luke speaks of him only as *Paul*.

11, 12. The terrible blindness inflicted on the impostor for his sins was intended to lead him to repentance. The suddenness with which the malady came struck the proconsul and opened his eyes to the truth of the faith which Paul was preaching.

13-15. Sailing from Paphos, Paul, with Barnabas, John Mark, and perhaps some other converts who had joined the little company, came to Perge (Perga), the capital of Pamphylia, on the river Cestrus. It was a journey of about 170 miles. We have no record

16. Then Paul rising up, and with his hand bespeaking silence, said: Ye men of Israel, and you that fear God, give ear.

17. The God of the people of Israel chose our fathers, and exalted the people when they were sojourners in the land of Egypt, and with an high arm brought them out from thence,

18. And for the space of forty years endured their manners in the desert.

of any preaching in Pamphylia, and here John Mark parted with the Apostle and went back to Jerusalem. We do not know the reason for this action on the part of Mark, but it was very displeasing to St. Paul. Proceeding from Perge by land, the missionaries came to Antioch in Pisidia, a journey of about 100 miles. Antioch was situated on the slopes of Mount Tarsus, and was the capital of Southern Galatia. It was built by Seleucus Nicanor in memory of his father Antiochus, and under Augustus was elevated to the dignity of a Roman colony. St. Paul's preaching in Antioch bore much fruit with the Gentiles, but the Jews became enraged against him.

**The Synagogue.** See on Matthew iv. 23. Paul entered the synagogue to take part in divine worship, and as it was customary to ask strangers who seemed qualified to give instruction to speak, Paul was requested by the rulers of the synagogue to give an exhortation to the people. See on Luke iv. 16.

16. **Ye men of Israel**, etc. This is St. Paul's first recorded discourse. He begins by addressing those who were Jews, "men of Israel," and those who were ordinary proselytes, "You that fear God." His discourse may be divided into three parts, in the first of which (verses 17-25) he briefly refers to the benefits conferred by God on the Jewish people from the beginning down to the time of the Messiah. In the second part (verses 26-37) the Apostle points out that Jesus, although rejected by the leaders of His people, was nevertheless the promised Messiah, since in Him were fulfilled all the ancient prophecies. In the third and last part (verses 38-41) he draws the conclusion that it is necessary to believe in Christ and adhere closely to Him.

17. **Our fathers**; i.e., the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the rest. **And exalted the people**; i.e., by multiplying them, by delivering them from bondage, humbling their enemies, etc.

18. **Endured their manners**, etc.; i.e., bore patiently with their infidelity, murmurs, ingratitude, etc. In place of *ἐτροποφόρησεν*,

19. And destroying seven nations in the land of Chanaan, divided their land among them, by lot,

20. As it were, after four hundred and fifty years: and after these things, he gave unto them judges, until Samuel the prophet.

*endured with patience*, some critics read, *ἐτροφοφόρησεν*, *nourished, fed*. This latter reading is found in several very good MSS., and perhaps gives the meaning most in conformity with what we know of God's dealings with the Israelites in the desert. He fed them, nourished them with wondrous care, but He also frequently reproached and threatened them.

19. **Seven nations.** See Deut. vii. 1. **Divided their land.** The best MSS. have here, *κατεκληρονόμησεν*, *gave them for an inheritance*, which means that God gave the Israelites the land of Canaan as an inheritance.

20. **After four hundred and fifty years.** There are two readings of this passage, that of the Vulgate and that of some of the Greek MSS. The former connects the period of time here mentioned with what has been said in the preceding verses. Some exegetes, following the Hebrew chronology, explain thus: From the going into Egypt until the peaceful possession of Canaan four hundred and fifty years elapsed, i.e., four hundred in Egypt (Gen. xv. 13), forty in the desert, and ten during the Canaanite wars (Sales). Others, according to the Septuagint chronology, explain as follows: From the birth of Isaac (which may be considered as the beginning of the Israelite race, since he was the first of the people promised to Abraham) to the division of Canaan among the tribes there were four hundred and fifty years, i.e., one hundred and ninety from Isaac to the going into Egypt, two hundred and fifteen in Egypt, forty in the desert, and seven years of wars (Crelrier).

The second reading, however, connects this passage, not with the preceding, but with the verses following, i.e., it makes the period of the Judges last four hundred and fifty years. This agrees sufficiently well with Josephus (*Antiq.* viii. 3, 1, and x. 8, 6), who states that five hundred and ninety-two years elapsed between Exodus and the beginning of Solomon's Temple, which would leave four hundred and forty-three years for the period of the Judges. But 3 Kings vi. 1 says that the Temple was begun four hundred and eighty years (four hundred and forty according to lxx) after the



21. And after that they desired a king: and God gave them Saul the son of Cis, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, forty years.

22. And when he had removed him, he raised them up David to be king: to whom giving testimony, he said: I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man according to my own heart, who shall do all my wills.

23. Of this man's seed God according to his promise, hath raised up to Israel a Saviour, Jesus:

24. John first preaching, before his coming, the baptism of penance to all the people of Israel.

25. And when John was fulfilling his course, he said: I am not he, whom you think me to be: but behold, there cometh one after me, whose shoes of his feet I am not worthy to loose.

26. Men, brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you fear God, to you the word of this salvation is sent.

27. For they that inhabited Jerusalem, and the rulers thereof, not knowing him, nor the voices of the prophets, which are read every sabbath, judging him have fulfilled them.

28. And finding no cause of death in him, they desired of Pilate, that they might kill him.

Exodus, which leaves only three hundred and thirty years for the period of the Judges. The chronology alone shows that the second reading is inadmissible, as the best critics admit.

**Gave unto them Judges;** i.e., after the people of Israel, on account of their sins, had been oppressed by others and had turned to God and done penance, God gave them Judges to deliver them.

21. **Forty years.** The Book of Kings (1 Kings xiii. 1) does not tell us how long Saul reigned, but Josephus (*Antiq.* vi. 14, 9) says it was forty years.

22. **According to my own heart,** etc. This is a substantial quotation from 1 Kings xiii. 14. While David was not always faithful in his private life, his public life as king was good and conformable to God's will.

23. God had promised to Abraham and David that the Messiah, the Saviour, should be born of their seed. Cf. 2 Kings vii. 16; Ps. lxxxviii. 30 ff.

24. **John first preaching,** etc. See on Matthew iii. 1, 2.

25. See on i. 5.

26. **The word of this salvation;** i.e., the announcement of the salvation whose author is Jesus the Saviour, spoken of in verse 23.

27. The Jews every Sabbath listened to the reading of the prophecies, many of which foretold the Passion and death of Jesus; but they did not understand them, although they even fulfilled them

29. And when they had fulfilled all things that were written of him, taking him down from the tree, they laid him in a sepulchre.

30. But God raised him up from the dead the third day :

31. Who was seen for many days, by them who came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who to this present are his witnesses to the people.

32. And we declare unto you, that the promise which was made to our fathers,

33. This same God hath fulfilled to our children, raising up Jesus, as in the second psalm also is written : Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.

later by persecuting and condemning the Saviour to death. Paul thus shows that the Passion and death of Jesus were preordained and foretold by God, and that, therefore, the scandal of the cross ought not to be an obstacle to their conversion.

29. See on Matthew xxvii. 57-60. It was, indeed, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who took down the body of our Lord and buried it, but these two disciples were dwelling in Jerusalem and were leaders of the people and members of the Sanhedrim.

30. **God raised him up**, etc. It was true that our Lord, as God, raised Himself from the dead ; but St. Paul is here trying only to show that our Lord was the Messiah, and that God has taken away the scandal of the cross ; he does not wish now to prove the further truth that Christ was God.

33. The meaning here is that God has kept the promise He made regarding a Saviour by sending Jesus Christ and manifesting Him to the world, especially at our Lord's Baptism, at the Transfiguration and the Resurrection, as the Messiah and His Son.

**As in the second psalm.** Some MSS. have, "in the first psalm." This difference is due either to the mistake of a copyist or to the fact that the first and second psalms were considered as one in ancient times, the first being regarded as the preface to the whole Psalter. The psalm cited is Messianic. In it the Messiah is described as a king chosen by God to whom the nations are often subjected, who scatters his enemies, but makes blessed those who believe in him, and who, moreover, is styled the true Son of God. The psalm is a description of our Lord's triumph over His enemies. The Gentiles and peoples rose up against Him to kill Him, but He was the Son of God, and through the merits of His Passion and death He triumphed over them all. And because He was the Son of God, born before all ages, identical in nature with the Father,

34. And to shew that he raised him up from the dead, not to return now any more to corruption, he said thus: I will give you the holy things of David faithful.

35. And therefore, in another place also, he saith: Thou shalt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption.

36. For David, when he had served in his generation, according to the will of God, slept: and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption.

37. But he whom God hath raised from the dead, saw no corruption.

38. Be it known therefore to you, men, brethren, that through him forgiveness of sins is preached to you: and from all the things, from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses.

39. In him every one that believeth, is justified.

it was not possible that He should remain in the sepulchre abandoned by His Father. Hence the Resurrection is a proof of our Lord's divinity. **This day** expresses eternity, in which there is no past or future, but only the abiding present.

34. Having shown that Jesus was the Messiah chosen by God, that He was called the true Son of God and was raised by God from the dead, St. Paul proceeds to show that the Resurrection was a permanent, enduring fact, and that the reign of the Messiah shall endure forever. **The holy things of David** is a quotation from the Septuagint of Isaias lv. 3. The words mean the holy and merciful promises made to David regarding benefits he should receive, and the glorious, never-ending reign of the Messiah who was to be born of David's seed. St. Paul is reasoning thus: God promised to David that the Messiah should come of his seed and that His reign should be without end. Now Jesus is the Messiah proclaimed and witnessed to by God Himself. Therefore it was necessary that God should raise Jesus from the dead in order that He might inherit His eternal throne, the throne of David.

35-37. **In another place**; i.e., in Psalm xv. 10, St. Paul argues that the prophecy of this psalm could not apply to David, who died; and hence it must refer to Christ, **whom God hath raised from the dead.**

38, 39. St. Paul now concludes that since Christ is the Messiah He alone can give to souls the justification and sanctification which the prophet (Isa. iv. 3; ix. 7; xi. 9, etc.) had foretold as characteristic of Messianic times; but in order to be justified by Christ it is necessary to believe in Him, and of course to believe and accept likewise all that He has taught and enjoined. No one could be

40. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken in the prophets:

41. Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you will not believe, if any man shall tell it you.

42. And as they went out, they desired them, that on the next sabbath, they would speak unto them these words.

43. And when the synagogue was broken up, many of the Jews, and of the strangers who served God, followed Paul and Barnabas: who speaking to them, persuaded them to continue in the grace of God.

44. But the next sabbath day, the whole city almost came together, to hear the word of God.

45. And the Jews seeing the multitudes, were filled with envy, and contradicted those things which were said by Paul, blaspheming.

said really to believe in Christ who did not also believe all of Christ's teachings and avail himself of all the means of justification which Christ has prescribed.

40, 41. St. Paul closes his discourse with a warning to the incredulous, lest God inflict upon them a punishment similar to that inflicted on the Jews by the Chaldeans. The quotation is from Habacuc i. 5. **The prophets** means that part of the Bible called "the prophets"; the minor prophets were generally included in one volume. **A work** refers to the chastisement of the Jews by the Chaldeans, who overran Palestine with fire and sword, destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple, and led the survivors away captive to Babylon. But a still greater chastisement, St. Paul threatens, shall overtake those who refuse to recognize Jesus as the Messiah and Saviour.

42, 43. So great was the impression made by St. Paul and Barnabas on their hearers that when the discourse was over they were asked to continue their preaching on the following Sabbath; and many of the Jews and proselytes went after the Apostles, as they left the synagogue, immediately requesting further instruction.

45. Filled with envy and jealousy over the success of Paul's preaching, and angered at the doctrine that the Gentiles should be allowed to enter the Messianic kingdom without first being subjected to circumcision and the observances of the Mosaic Law, the Jewish leaders and teachers began to contradict St. Paul. They would not admit a Messiah who would take away their privileges and receive Gentiles on an equal footing with Jews, and hence

46. Then Paul and Barnabas said boldly: To you it behoved us first to speak the word of God: but because you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold we turn to the Gentiles.

47. For so the Lord hath commanded us: I have set thee to be the light of the Gentiles; that thou mayest be for salvation unto the utmost part of the earth.

48. And the Gentiles hearing it, were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to life everlasting, believed.

49. And the word of the Lord was published throughout the whole country.

50. But the Jews stirred up religious and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas: and cast them out of their coasts.

51. But they, shaking off the dust of their feet against them, came to Iconium.

“blaspheming” they broke out into injurious speech against our Lord also.

46. It behooved the Apostles to preach first to the Jews and announce to them the fulfillment of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, because to the Jews were delivered the oracles of the prophets; but now, by refusing faith in Christ, the only way to eternal life, the Jews had become unworthy of that life.

47. **The Lord hath commanded us**, etc. It was the will of God, made manifest through the prophet Isaias (xlix. 6), that the good tidings of the Gospel should be carried to the Gentiles and to all the world.

48. **Were ordained**, *τεταγμένοι*, *præordinati*, in the Vulgate, means *well disposed*, as contrasted with the Jews who were ill disposed to make use of the means for obtaining eternal life. It is generally admitted that there is no question of predestination here, although St. Augustine often infers from this passage that election to glory depends solely on the free will of God, and not at all on the merits of the elect. We must, however, hold that the good dispositions of the converts for faith were from God and not from their own merits.

50. **Honourable women**; i.e., proselytes, who had been converted to Judaism, but whose prominent and influential husbands had remained pagans. These women, influenced by the Jews, persuaded their husbands that Paul and Barnabas should be cast out as disturbers of the peace. This was the first persecution Paul encountered on his mission, but numerous others were to follow.

51. **Shaking off the dust**, etc. This action on the part of the

52. And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost.

Apostles was intended to show that the people who rejected or ill treated them were unworthy of further attention, and were to be avoided, even as things unclean or impure. The Rabbis taught the Jews always to shake the dust from their feet when coming from pagan cities or lands to Palestine.

Iconium, now known as *Konieh*, was about 100 miles southeast of Antioch in Pisidia. In St. Paul's time it was the capital of Lycaonia, and belonged to the Roman province of Galatia.

52. The disciples; i.e., the new converts whom Paul left behind at Antioch. In spite of persecution they were full of joy, and ready to suffer anything for the sake of Christ.

## CHAPTER XIV

PAUL AND BARNABAS PREACH IN ICONIUM, 1-5.

THEY GO TO LYSTRA AND TO DERBE, 6-19.

THE RETURN JOURNEY TO ANTIOCH IN SYRIA, 20-27.

1. And it came to pass in Iconium, that they entered together into the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a very great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks did believe.

2. But the unbelieving Jews stirred up and incensed the minds of the Gentiles against the brethren.

3. A long time therefore they abode there, dealing confidently in the Lord, who gave testimony to the word of his grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

4. And the multitude of the city was divided; and some of them indeed held with the Jews, but some with the apostles.

5. And when there was an assault made by the Gentiles and the Jews with their rulers, to use them contumeliously, and to stone them:

1. **Together**, — rather, *likewise, similarly* (κατὰ τὸ αὐτό). The meaning is that Paul and Barnabas at Iconium, just as at the preceding city, entered into the synagogue of the Jews. **The Greeks** were proselytes from paganism.

2. **Stirred up**, etc. The cause of the bitter opposition shown to St. Paul everywhere by the Jews was his teaching that the converts to Christianity from paganism did not have to submit to the rites and ceremonies of the Law of Moses. This the Jewish converts stubbornly fought against.

3. In spite of persecution the two Apostles continued their labors in Iconium some two years, and God bore witness to their preaching of His Gospel by miracles and signs wrought through them.

4. **With the apostles**. Here for the first time Paul and Barnabas are called Apostles. Paul was an Apostle in the strict sense, having been called by Christ Himself (2 Cor. x-xii). Barnabas, unlike Paul and the other twelve, was an Apostle only in a general sense, as having been selected by the Church for a particular purpose (xiii. 3; xv. 25).

5. **An assault made**; i.e., when they were contemplating or about

6. They understanding it, fled to Lystra, and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and to the whole country round about, and were there preaching the gospel.

7. And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked.

8. This same heard Paul speaking. Who looking upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be healed,

9. Said with a loud voice: Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up, and walked.

10. And when the multitudes had seen what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice in the Lycaonian tongue, saying: The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men;

11. And they called Barnabas, Jupiter: but Paul, Mercury; because he was chief speaker.

12. The priest also of Jupiter that was before the city, bringing oxen and garlands before the gate, would have offered sacrifice with the people.

13. Which, when the apostles Barnabas and Paul had heard, rending their clothes, they leaped out among the people, crying,

14. And saying: Ye men, why do ye these things? We also are mortals, men like unto you, preaching to you to be converted from these vain things, to the living God, who made the heaven, and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are in them:

to make an assault. Stoning was the punishment prescribed in the law for blasphemy.

6-11. Being privately informed of the designs of the Jews the Apostles fled to Lystra, about 30 miles south of Iconium. Here the man, lame from his birth, was cured, and the people, being pagans, thought Paul and Barnabas to be Mercury and Jupiter, and proposed to worship them and offer sacrifice to them. They called Barnabas Jupiter or Jove, because of his great stature and beautiful countenance, and Paul they styled Mercury, the interpreter of the gods, on account of his eloquence.

12. The priest . . . that was before the city; i.e., the priest that had his temple at the entrance to the city. Jupiter was the protecting deity of the city of Lystra, and his image or temple was located near the gate of the city, as was customary with the pagans. Oxen were the prescribed victims for Jupiter; and garlands, made of white wool entwined with flowers, adorned the victim and the priest. Before the gate; i.e., before the hall of the house where Paul and Barnabas were.

13. Rending their clothes, as the Jews were accustomed to do in order to express intense grief or indignation. Cf. Matt. xxvi. 65.

14. Mortals; i.e., of like passions and infirmities as yourselves



15. Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

16. Nevertheless he left not himself without testimony, doing good from heaven, giving rains and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

17. And speaking these things, they scarce restrained the people from sacrificing to them.

18. Now there came thither certain Jews from Antioch, and Iconium: and persuading the multitude, and stoning Paul, drew him out of the city, thinking him to be dead.

(*ἰδωιοπαθεῖς ὑμῖν*). **These vain things; i.e., these empty and useless idols that you worship.**

15. Before the coming of our Lord and the preaching of the Gospel all the nations, except the Jews, were permitted by Almighty God to go the way of their perverse human hearts. Not that the light of reason was taken away from them, but that they were deprived of the special revelation and assistance which were given to others. Such special help from God was in a measure given to the Jews, but in its perfection it was reserved for the followers of Christ in the New Law.

16. Although the pagans had not a written law to guide them, like the Jews, nor had they the prophets to chide and admonish them, still they possessed human reason and the natural law inscribed on their hearts, which, if they did not resist, were sufficient to lead them to a knowledge of the existence of the one true God and of His principal attributes. The causality of God in the world, and His divine providence in governing and providing for everything, are sufficiently manifest to convince any unimpeded reason that there is a God, that He is good, just, merciful, etc. If the pagans lived up to the dictates of reason and the natural law inscribed on their hearts, they were without blame before God; but if otherwise, they were guilty of sin. See St. Thomas, *Summa Theol.* iii, qu. 70, a. 4, ad 2. 4 *Sent. dist.* 1, q. 1. qu. 2; 1a 2ae, qu. 98, a. 5.

18. There were doubtless some conversions made between the events recorded in this verse and those of the verses immediately preceding; hence some little time must have elapsed. Certain Jews from Antioch in Pisidia and from Iconium made a long journey to obstruct the good work of the Apostles. They attacked Paul and inflicted on him the punishment prescribed for blasphemy. St. Paul speaks of this stoning in 2 Cor. xi. 25.

19. But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up and entered into the city, and the next day he departed with Barnabas to Derbe.

20. And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch:

21. Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith: and that through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God.

22. And when they had ordained to them priests in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, in whom they believed.

23. And passing through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia.

24. And having spoken the word of the Lord in Perge, they went down into Attalia:

19. **The disciples**; i.e., the Christians, thinking St. Paul dead, stood round to guard his body; but when the crowd had departed the Apostle rose up and reentered the city. This recovery of St. Paul is generally regarded as a great miracle, for he had been given up for dead; the healing of his wounds, at least, was miraculous.

20, 21. After instructing many at Derbe the two Apostles went back to the cities where they had previously preached and suffered, in order to encourage the faithful there to continue in the faith and to bear their trials for God and His Kingdom.

22. One of the principal reasons why Paul and Barnabas returned to the cities where they had preached was to establish and organize churches for the faithful and to ordain priests for them. There is no doubt that there is question here of real ordination to the priesthood, because there was imposition of hands (*χειροτονήσαντες*, literally, *stretched out hands*, i.e., *laying on of hands*), accompanied by prayer and fasting. See on xiii. 3.

The verb *χειροτονεῖν* literally signifies *to extend the hand*, and refers to a method of voting by raising the hand; it also frequently means *to choose, to appoint*, and when used, as here, in connection with prayer and fasting, it refers, without doubt, to real ordination. Hence the word *χειροτονία* was often used by the Greek Fathers to signify ordination, and has come to be the official name of that Sacrament in the Greek Church, while the noun *χειροθεσία* there means the Sacrament of Confirmation. Cf. Crelier, *La Sainte Bible, Les Actes des Apôtres*.

24. **Attalia**, now called *Sandalia*, was one of the principal seaports of Pamphylia. It was founded by King Attalus II,

25. And thence they sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been delivered to the grace of God, unto the work which they accomplished.

26. And when they were come, and had assembled the church, they related what great things God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles.

27. And they abode no small time with the disciples.

25. **To Antioch**, in Syria, whence they had departed some three to five years before. The two Apostles left Antioch around A.D. 45 and returned there A.D. 49.

26, 27. The Apostles on their return attributed all the success of their mission to God, as indeed it was His grace that gave fruit to their labors. We do not know how long they tarried in Antioch, but it must have been for at least a couple of years, if the Council of Jerusalem was in A.D. 51 or 52.

## CHAPTER XV

THE DISSENSION ABOUT CIRCUMCISION, AND THE  
COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM, 1-6.

THE DECISION OF ST. PETER, 7-12.

THE DISCOURSE OF ST. JAMES, 13-21.

THE DECREE OF THE COUNCIL OF JERUSALEM, 22-29.

THE DECREE IS PUBLISHED AT ANTIOCH, 30-35.

THE DISSENSION BETWEEN ST. PAUL AND BARNABAS,  
36-41.

1. And some coming down from Judea, taught the brethren: That except you be circumcised after the manner of Moses, you cannot be saved.

2. And when Paul and Barnabas had no small contest with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain others of the other side, should go up to the apostles and priests to Jerusalem about this question.

1. **And some coming down, etc.** These were Jews who had been converted to Christianity. They contended that circumcision and the observances of the Mosaic Law were essential for salvation, and that therefore converts from paganism should first be subjected to these observances. In order to make their influence more effective they came down from Jerusalem, the seat of greatest authority, to Antioch, which was known as the center of the Church, and whose Christian community was composed of Gentile converts. It is true that the vision of St. Peter and the consequent conclusion that Mosaic observances were no longer necessary for salvation (x-xi) were well known, and had been accepted by the faithful at Jerusalem; but as the number of converts, especially from the sect of the Pharisees, grew, the old ideas about the eternity of the Law of Moses and the necessity of its observance again became prominent. The case of Cornelius and the decision of St. Peter at the time were gradually looked upon as exceptional, and the result of a special divine intervention.

2. The doctrine of those Jewish converts from Jerusalem caused a great controversy and agitation in the Church at Antioch, in

3. They therefore being brought on their way by the church, passed through Phenice, and Samaria, relating the conversion of the Gentiles; and they caused great joy to all the brethren.

4. And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received by the church, and by the apostles and ancients, declaring how great things God had done with them.

5. But there arose some of the sect of the Pharisees that believed, saying: They must be circumcised, and be commanded to observe the law of Moses.

6. And the apostles and ancients assembled to consider of this matter.

particular, since the agitators pretended to have authority from the Apostles at Jerusalem (Gal. ii. 2, 6, 9). Hence the heads of the Church at Antioch decided that Paul and Barnabas, with Titus (Gal. ii. 1) and some others, should go up to Jerusalem and consult Peter and the other Apostles there with a view to settling this question (Gal. ii. 9).

The *ex aliis* of the Vulgate here would imply that among the delegates sent to Jerusalem there were some opposed to the opinion of Paul; but since the phrase is not in the Greek it is thought that it is a corruption for *ex illis*. Certain other Latin versions have *ex illis* instead of *ex aliis*.

From the Epistle to the Galatians (ii. 2) we know that St. Paul was moved to go up to Jerusalem at this time by divine revelation, as well as by the decision of the elders of the Church at Antioch.

3. On their journey to Jerusalem the two Apostles, accompanied by some of the faithful who represented the Church at Antioch, took the road by the seacoast, through Tyre and Sidon, the chief cities of Phoenicia. The story of the success of their mission in Asia Minor caused great joy to the converts whom they met on their way.

4. The journey from Antioch to Jerusalem required from twelve to fifteen days. This was St. Paul's third visit to the city after his conversion. Cf. ix. 26; xi. 30. At this time there were present at Jerusalem only James the Less, Peter, and John (Gal. ii. 9), and the "ancients," i.e., the priests. First to these, and later on (verse 12) to the multitude, St. Paul discoursed on his labors among the Gentiles.

5. **The Pharisees that believed;** i.e., converts from the sect of the Pharisees. See on iv. 1.

6. This convention of the Apostles and priests has always been

7. And when there had been much disputing, Peter, rising up, said to them : Men, brethren, you know, that in former days God made choice among us, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.

8. And God, who knoweth the hearts, gave testimony, giving unto them the Holy Ghost, as well as to us ;

9. And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10. Now therefore, why tempt you God to put a yoke upon the necks of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear ?

11. But by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we believe to be saved, in like manner as they also.

called the first Council of the Church. There were present Peter, the head of the Church, other Apostles and priests ; and their decision, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, became the general law for the whole Church.

7-9. **Peter . . . said to them**, etc. Peter, as head of the Church, having heard both sides of the dispute, rises to give the decision. He recalls to the minds of those present the case of Cornelius some fourteen years before, and points out that God, by a special revelation, had manifested His will to the effect that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the Church on an equal footing with the Jews, without being subjected to the observances of the Mosaic Law. He further observes that God gave to the Gentile converts, whom he had received, as well as to the Jews, the Holy Ghost, and that their hearts were purified, according to God's own testimony, not by Mosaic observances, but by faith in Jesus Christ whom he had preached.

10. **Why tempt you God** ; i.e., why provoke God to anger by resisting His manifest will ?

**Nor we have been able to bear** ; i.e., scarcely able to bear ; there is not here a question of absolute impossibility. There were really two parts to the Law : (a) the Natural Law, or the Ten Commandments ; (b) the ceremonial and legal regulations. The former were not at all abolished, but perfected, by the New Law ; the latter Christ intended to do away with, since they had become an unsupportable burden, and were in time regarded by the Jews as even more important than the divine Natural Law, summarized in the Decalogue.

11. Although the Jews had the Law, Peter says, they were not justified and saved by the Law, but by faith in the Redeemer to

12. And all the multitude held their peace; and they heard Barnabas and Paul telling what great signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.

13. And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying: Men, brethren, hear me.

14. Simon hath related how God first visited to take of the Gentiles a people to his name.

15. And to this agree the words of the prophets, as it is written:

16. After these things I will return, and will rebuild the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and the ruins thereof I will rebuild, and I will set it up:

17. That the residue of men may seek after the Lord, and all nations upon whom my name is invoked, saith the Lord, who doth these things.

come; and likewise both Jews and Gentiles are now to be saved, not by the Law, but by the grace of faith in Jesus Christ who has come.

12. After Peter had spoken, and his words had been respectfully received by the assembly, Paul and Barnabas related to the multitude the success of their mission among the Gentiles. The relation of the miracles and signs of approval with which God had favored their labors was a confirmation of what Peter had just said.

13. James answered. This was James the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. He was the son of Alphaeus, also called Cleophas, and Mary, the cousin of the Blessed Virgin. He was therefore a cousin of our Lord, and was consequently, according to Jewish custom, called "the brother of the Lord." See on i. 14; Matthew xiii. 54-56.

14. God first visited . . . the Gentiles; i.e., looked upon them with favor (*ἐπεσκέψατο*) to take from among them a people who would do His will and serve Him.

15-17. The action of God, in looking with favor and mercy on the Gentiles, and wishing to receive them into His Church independently of Mosaic observances, was in conformity with what the prophets had foretold. St. James cites the prophet Amos (ix. 11, 12) according to the Septuagint version, which is somewhat different from the Hebrew. **The tabernacle of David** means the royal power of David which was destroyed and taken away by the Babylonians under Nabuchodonosor, but which was to be restored in the time of the Messiah. See Jer. xxiii. 5; xxxiii. 15; Ezech. xvii. 22; xxi. 27, etc.

18. To the Lord was his own work known from the beginning of the world.

19. For which cause I judge that they, who from among the Gentiles are converted to God, are not to be disquieted.

20. But that we write unto them, that they refrain themselves from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

**That the residue of men, etc.** In the Hebrew it is "the residue of Edom." The sense is that in the time of the Messiah, when the kingdom of David should be restored, all nations and all peoples, even the Edomites, who were enemies of the people of Israel, should be admitted to a participation in the privileges and blessings of Israel.

**Saith the Lord.** This shows that the prophecy just uttered would be fulfilled, because it was God who uttered it.

18, 19. St. James here says that God could foretell the conversion of the Gentiles and their participation in the blessings of the new kingdom, His Church, because He knows from eternity all that shall take place in time. The Gentiles, therefore, who are but enjoying the privileges God foretold for them and provided for them, are not to be troubled.

20. The converted Gentiles were not obliged to submit either to circumcision or to the Mosaic observances, and yet St. James thought it well, for the sake of peace, to ask them to be careful about certain things which were very offensive to the Jews.

**The pollutions of idols; i.e., the meats offered in sacrifice to idols.** These meats were afterwards partaken of by those present, and often sold on the public market. Even Christians converted from paganism thought it perfectly legitimate to eat of this meat, while to do so was an abomination to the Jews.

**Fornication, πορνεία,** although forbidden by natural law, was so common among the pagans, even at public entertainments and religious services, that St. James considered it necessary to warn Gentile converts against this vice, lest after their conversion they should continue to practice it. Cf. also 1 Cor. v. 1; vi. 9, 13-20; 2 Cor. xii. 21.

Cornely and others, however, think that "fornication" here refers to marriages between near relatives, which were forbidden by the Law of Moses (Lev. xviii), or marriages between pagans and believers.



21. For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him in the synagogues, where he is read every sabbath.

22. Then it pleased the apostles and ancients, with the whole church, to choose men of their own company, and to send to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, namely, Judas, who was surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren.

23. Writing by their hands: The apostles and ancients, brethren, to the brethren of the Gentiles that are at Antioch, and in Syria and Cilicia, greeting.

**From things strangled, etc.** The command to abstain from "blood" as food was given by God himself to Noe (Gen. ix. 4), and the prohibition to eat "things strangled" was a deduction from the Law (Lev. iii. 17; vii. 26; xvii. 13, 14). Strangled meats were forbidden because of the great quantity of blood they contained, and blood by divine ordination was supposed to be used only for the expiation of sin (Lev. xvii. 11). See below, on verses 28, 29.

21. St. James here explains why he counsels the pagan converts to abstain from the foregoing things; namely, because the Mosaic Law which prohibits them has been read in the Synagogues every Saturday from the remotest times, and is, therefore, so well known to the Jews that to see pagan converts openly disregard it would be more than they could peacefully tolerate.

St. James, therefore, agrees with St. Peter and St. Paul that the Gentiles are free from the Mosaic observances which the Jews wish to have imposed on them, but he at the same time counsels the Gentiles to refrain from certain pagan practices which were extremely obnoxious to Jews. So much was necessary for peace and unity in the Church.

22. The Apostles and priests with the whole assembly now selected from among their group some prominent men of authority to accompany Paul and Barnabas and carry the decree of the Council to the Church at Antioch. Those chosen for this mission were Judas Barsabas, probably a brother of Joseph Barsabas (i. 23), and Silas, in Latin, Silvanus, who was afterwards the constant companion of St. Paul on his missions to Macedonia (xv. 40; xvi. 19; xvii. 4; 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1; 2 Thess. i. 1). **Chief men, etc.**, ἀνδρας ἡγουμένους; i.e., *leaders, guides*, which shows they were men of special authority, as priests or Bishops.

23. **Writing by their hands;** i.e., the Apostles wrote letters by them, or employed these men to write for them in the following

24. Forasmuch as we have heard, that some going out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment:

25. It hath seemed good to us, being assembled together, to choose out men, and to send them unto you, with our well beloved Barnabas and Paul:

26. Men that have given their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

27. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also will, by word of mouth, tell you the same things.

28. For it hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay no further burden upon you than these necessary things:

29. That you abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which things keeping yourselves, you shall do well. Fare ye well.

manner: "The Apostles," etc. In Greek we have "and" before *brethren*, but the reading of the Vulgate is according to the best Greek MSS. The mention of "Syria and Cilicia" shows that the errors had spread beyond Antioch.

24, 25. **Subverting your souls**; i.e., troubling or upsetting their minds by requiring them without authority to submit to the Mosaic observances. **Being assembled together**; i.e., being assembled in full accord (Greek).

27. **Judas and Silas**, who would tell them by word of mouth the selfsame things which were written in the letters they were bearing.

28, 29. The prohibitions of the Council of Jerusalem are mentioned three times in the Acts: here, in xv. 20, and in xxi. 25. There are two readings of the decree of this Council: (a) *The Three Clause Text* or *Western Reading*—found in Codex Bezae (D), the Old Latin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, etc.,—mentions only three prohibitions,—abstinence from meats offered to idols, from blood, and from fornication. Codex Bezae and Irenaeus add the Golden Rule: "Whatsoever ye would not have done unto yourselves, do ye not unto others." (b) *The Four Clause Text*—found in the great uncial MSS., Sinaitic, Alex., Vat., etc.—adds to the three prohibitions just mentioned a fourth, namely, abstinence from things strangled. Which of these readings is correct is a much disputed question. Some think the two can be reconciled by following the reading, "sanguine suffocato," found in certain MSS. of the Vulgate and in some Latin Fathers.

30. They therefore being dismissed, went down to Antioch; and gathering together the multitude, delivered the epistle.

Guided by the Holy Ghost, according to the promise of Christ (Matt. xviii. 18; John xiv. 26; xv. 26; xvi. 13), the Apostles gave an infallible decision on the questions under discussion. The pagan converts were to be troubled with "no further burden" from the Law of Moses, except the observance of the Decalogue, which was of the natural law; but, for the sake of unity and peace in the Church, they should refrain from certain pagan practices very offensive to the Jews. The Apostolic decree, then, was partly a food law or disciplinary measure, inasmuch as it commanded a temporary and local abstinence from certain foods prohibited by the Mosaic Law; and partly a moral law, inasmuch as it prohibited fornication. The opinion of Resch, Harnack, and other advocates of the Three Clause Reading — who think the decree was merely a moral enactment, and that it forbade sins against God (idolatry), against self (fornication), and against the neighbor (blood) — is not supported by convincing arguments.

The rationalists find a difficulty here. They say: (a) St. Luke's account of the decree of the Council of Jerusalem cannot be correct, because St. Paul makes no mention of such a decree when writing to the Galatians. *Answer:* It was not to St. Paul's purpose to refer to this decree in his Epistle to the Galatians. He was there writing a defense of himself, and omitted all that did not serve this end. Moreover, the Jewish converts of Galatia, to whom St. Paul wrote his Epistle, held that the Mosaic observances were necessary in order to be perfect Christians, not, however, for salvation. The decree of the Council condemned the teaching that the Mosaic observances were *necessary* for salvation; (b) St. Paul, writing to the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 25-27), gave them permission to eat meats that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. *Answer:* The prohibition or counsel to pagan converts not to eat meat offered to idols was only a disciplinary matter for the sake of peace and unity among the newly converted. Accordingly, where the Jews were far in the minority, as at Corinth, it was not necessary to insist on a merely disciplinary part of the decree of the Council of Jerusalem. It was not wrong in itself to eat meat offered to idols. See A. Camerlynck, *Com. in Actus. Apost.*; W. Drum, S.J., *The 'Apostolic Decree,' Eccl. Review*, January, 1914.

31. Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.

32. But Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, with many words comforted the brethren, and confirmed them.

33. And after they had spent some time there, they were let go with peace by the brethren, unto them that had sent them.

34. But it seemed good unto Silas to remain there; and Judas alone departed to Jerusalem.

35. And Paul and Barnabas continued at Antioch, teaching and preaching, with many others, the word of the Lord.

36. And after some days, Paul said to Barnabas: Let us return and visit our brethren in all the cities wherein we have preached the word of the Lord, to see how they do.

37. And Barnabas would have taken with them John also, that was surnamed Mark;

38. But Paul desired that he (as having departed from them out of Pamphylia, and not gone with them to the work) might not be received.

39. And there arose a dissension, so that they departed one from another; and Barnabas indeed taking Mark, sailed to Cyprus.

40. But Paul choosing Silas, departed, being delivered by the brethren to the grace of God.

41. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, commanding them to keep the precepts of the apostles and the ancients.

31. The letter containing the decree of the Council gave great consolation to the Gentile converts at Antioch.

32. **Prophets**; i.e., teachers sent by God with proper qualifications for instructing the faithful.

34. This verse is wanting in many MSS., but its presence in others, and its conformity to what is said in verse 40, leave no doubt as to its authenticity.

35. **At Antioch.** It was perhaps during this time that Peter and Paul had the minor misunderstanding mentioned in Gal. ii. 11-16.

36. Paul now makes ready to start on his second missionary journey. From his words to Barnabas it would seem that he intended at first to visit only the scenes of his first journey, but the Holy Ghost directed him to evangelize other parts.

39. **A dissension**; i.e., a sharp dispute (*παροξυσμός*). Paul mistrusted the constancy of Mark; but it was only for a time, for later Mark became a zealous missionary and was of great help and consolation to Paul. Cf. Coloss. iv. 10; Philem. 24; 2 Tim. iv. 11. Now, however, Paul found a faithful companion in Silas, and began to visit the neighboring churches of Syria and of his own native country, Tarsus, while Barnabas and John Mark went back to Cyprus.

## CHAPTER XVI

PAUL AND TIMOTHY VISIT THE CHURCHES OF PHRYGIA,  
GALATIA, AND MYSIA, ETC., 1-8.

THEY CROSS TO MACEDONIA AND PREACH IN PHILIPPI,  
9-15.

THE GIRL POSSESSED WITH THE SPIRIT OF DIVINATION  
IS CURED, AND PAUL AND SILAS ARE IMPRISONED,  
16-25.

PAUL AND SILAS ARE MIRACULOUSLY LIBERATED, 26-40.

1. And he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, there was a certain disciple there named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman that believed; but his father was a Gentile.

2. To this man the brethren that were in Lystra and Iconium, gave a good testimony.

3. Him Paul would have to go along with him: and taking him he circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those places. For they all knew that his father was a Gentile.

1. **Timothy** was most probably converted by St. Paul during the latter's first mission. It is uncertain whether he was a native of Derbe or Lystra. He became a devoted follower of Paul, accompanying him to Greece, Rome, and Jerusalem. St. Paul addressed two of his Epistles to Timothy.

Timothy's mother, Eunice, was a Jewish convert to Christianity, but his father was a Greek. The marriage of Timothy's parents seems to have been contrary to Jewish Law (Nehem. xiii. 3; 1 Esdras ix. 12), which prohibited marriages between Jews and Gentiles, but perhaps the law did not bind so strictly outside of Palestine.

3. **He circumcised him.** This action was not contrary to the decree of the Council of Jerusalem, which only decided that the Gentiles were not obliged to observe the Mosaic rites and ceremonies, but did not prohibit the Jews from observing them, if they chose to do so. Timothy was born of a Jewish mother, and was

4. And as they passed through the cities, they delivered unto them the decrees for to keep, that were decreed by the apostles and ancients who were at Jerusalem.

5. And the churches were confirmed in faith, and increased in number daily.

6. And when they had passed through Phrygia, and the country of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.

to be employed by St. Paul to preach the Gospel where there were many Jews. In order, therefore, to facilitate Timothy's work among the Jews, who without circumcision would have regarded him as an apostate, St. Paul circumcised him (1 Cor. ix. 20, 21). When there was question of circumcising Titus, who was born of Gentile parents, St. Paul stood firm by the decree of the Council of Jerusalem and refused absolutely (Gal. ii. 3-5).

4. **The cities;** i.e., the cities of Syria and Cilicia, where Paul and Barnabas had preached and founded churches.

6. **The country of Galatia.** There is a fierce dispute as to what country these words, and the similar words of xviii. 23, may refer; whether, namely, St. Luke in these two passages means to indicate Northern Galatia (Galatia Proper), in which were the cities Ancyra, Pessinus, and Tavium; or Southern Galatia (the Roman Province of Galatia), in which Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch were situated.

*Answer:* The term *Galatia* was applied — (a) to the country conquered by Celtic invaders in the third century B.C. (Galatia Proper), the boundaries of which were Bithynia on the north, Pontus and Cappadocia on the east, Lycaonia and Pisidia on the south, and Phrygia on the west; (b) to the Roman Province of Galatia, established in the second century A.D., from which the Proper, Paphlagonia, parts of Pontus and Lycaonia, Pisidia, Isauria, and a part of Phrygia; (c) to the Roman Province of Galatia established in the second century A.D., from which the whole of central and southern Lycaonia was separated.

There are two theories as to the meaning of the term *Galatia* in the present verse and in xviii. 3: (a) The *North Galatian* theory, which holds that St. Luke is speaking of Galatia Proper only. Arguments for this theory: (1) This is the older and more common opinion; (2) the present verse in the great MSS. reads: "They went through Phrygia and the Galatian country, having been for-

bidden by the Holy Ghost to speak the word in Asia." The natural interpretation, according to this theory, is that Paul, having reached the borders of Asia, was forbidden to preach there, and so turned northeast to Galatia Proper.

(b) The second, or *South Galatian* theory maintains that St. Luke is speaking of the southern part of the Roman Province of Galatia, where were the churches of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, etc. Arguments for this theory: (1) verse 7 of the present chapter shows the Apostle in Mysia on his way to Bithynia. As there seems to be question here of a single continuous journey geography requires that the missionaries, having been forbidden to preach in Asia, should not have made a detour of some hundreds of miles to the east, into North Galatia, but should have continued on through the Phrygian-Galatian country to Mysia in Asia with the intention of entering Bithynia. (2) If St. Paul went to North Galatia this was either to establish churches there, or to reach Bithynia. If the first, it is most extraordinary that St. Luke, contrary to his custom, gives no account of these new foundations; if the second was his purpose, it is strange that in the next verse the Apostle is represented as striving to enter Bithynia from Mysia, many hundreds of miles to the west.

Thus the South Galatian theory seems more conformable to the requirements of geography and the text. The arguments for the other theory are not conclusive. That the North Galatian theory is older may be due to the fact that the name *Galatia* from the second century A.D. onward had not the same meaning as in the time of St. Paul. Furthermore, the prohibition to preach (λαλῆσαι τὸν λόγον) in Asia does not seem a sufficient reason for not continuing the journey through Asia. But if this prohibition did cause the missionaries to turn back toward the east, how do we find them in the next verse in Mysia, so far to the west? How did they get there? Either by going through Asia, against their first resolution, or by going through Bithynia (see map); if through Bithynia, why do we find the Apostle trying to enter Bithynia from Mysia? This is inexplicable. Cf. Lightfoot, *Epistle to the Galatians*; Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, etc.; Steinmann, *Der Leserk. des Galaterbr.*; Conway, *The Galatian Churches*, Irish Theol. Quarterly, January, 1919.

7. And when they were come into Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.

8. And when they had passed through Mysia, they went down to Troas.

9. And a vision was shewed to Paul in the night, which was a man of Macedonia standing and beseeching him, and saying: Pass over into Macedonia, and help us.

It is objected that St. Luke here and in xviii. 23 represents St. Paul as merely passing through Galatia, whereas from the Epistle to the Galatians it is evident that the Apostle's stay there was considerably prolonged. *Answer:* In the South Galatian theory this objection disappears, since St. Luke speaks about the Apostle's prolonged labors in the cities and districts of Southern Galatia on his first missionary journey (xiv. 1-24) and his visits to the churches there on his second and third journeys (xvi. 1-5; xviii. 23). According to the North Galatian theory it can be replied: (a) St. Luke is speaking of Galatia Proper, while St. Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians is addressing the whole province of Galatia, both North and South; (b) St. Luke is accustomed often to condense long periods and many events into a brief description. Thus the two years of St. Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea are described in a few lines; and only one verse (xviii. 22) is devoted to the Apostle's fourth journey to Jerusalem.

**In Asia;** i.e., Proconsular Asia, the country bordering on the Aegean Sea, of which the capital was Ephesus. The Holy Ghost forbade the preaching of the Gospel here, perhaps because the people were at the time indisposed, or at least not so well-disposed as the Macedonians.

7. **Mysia** was a part of Proconsular Asia Minor bordering on the Aegean Sea, the chief cities of which were Pergamos, Assos, and Troas. **Bithynia** was the province northeast of Mysia.

**The spirit of Jesus;** i.e., the Holy Ghost directed the Apostles to carry the Gospel to Europe; Asia Minor had been sufficiently evangelized for the time being.

8. **Troas** was a seaport of great importance, about five miles from ancient Troy.

9. **A man of Macedonia,** who was perhaps St. Luke himself. This vision at Troas now explained why St. Paul had not been permitted to preach in Asia. The Holy Ghost was directing him to an important missionary journey in Europe.



10. And as soon as he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, being assured that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11. And sailing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the day following to Neapolis;

10. **We sought to go**, etc. The use of the first person plural shows that St. Luke, the writer of the Acts, now became a disciple of St. Paul. When he leaves Paul at Philippi the use of the first person ceases (verse 17).

This is the first place where St. Luke in the Acts speaks in the first person plural. In all there are ninety-seven verses of this character in the Acts (xvi. 10-17; xx. 5-15; xxi. 1-18; xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16) and they constitute what is known as the "we sections" (*wirkstücke*). The German rationalists (Jülicher, Haltzmann, Wendt, Schürer, etc.) make much of these passages to disprove the Lukan authorship of the book of Acts. They contend that the verses in question were a part of a diary of Luke, the companion of Paul, which was retouched by a subsequent writer of the Acts and inserted by him into his work to give it credibility. That the author of the "we sections" was not the author of the rest of the book of Acts, they say is evident from the differences in style, vocabulary, and thought between these verses and the rest of the book.

Against these critics we may first quote the words of Harnack: "If we read the Acts of the Apostles . . . with discernment, we discover *one mind and one hand*. . . . We really have here a man of the first Greek generation in the history of Christianity" (*Lukas*, p. 102).

Moreover, the use of precise medical terms, which are characteristic of St. Luke in the Third Gospel and in the rest of the Acts, prevails also in the "we sections." See e.g., *καθῆψεν* (xxviii. 3), *πιμπρασθαι* (xxviii. 6), *πνευτοῖς καὶ δυσεντερίῳ* (xxviii. 8), etc., all of which have been shown to be technical medical terms. Cf. Hobart, *The Medical Language of St. Luke*. Hence again Harnack, after a careful comparison of the words and style of the "we sections" with those of the rest of the book of Acts and the Third Gospel, concludes that so striking is the analogy between the terms of comparison that we must admit the identity of the author of both (*Lukas*, pp. 19-60). The conclusion, in fact, reached by nearly everybody to-day, whether Catholic, Protestant,

12. And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were in this city some days conferring together.

13. And upon the sabbath day, we went forth without the gate by a river side, where it seemed that there was prayer; and sitting down, we spoke to the women that were assembled.

14. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, did hear: whose heart the Lord opened to attend to those things which were said by Paul.

15. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying: If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

or rationalist, is that the Third Gospel and the Acts were written by the same author, and have the same characteristics of spirit and style throughout, and that these are the characteristics of Luke.

The "we sections," then, of the Acts, instead of weakening the unity and authenticity of the book, are in reality a historical and philological confirmation of oneness of authorship and authenticity. See *Decisions of the Biblical Commission*, No. III, page 197.

12. **Philippi**, so called after Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great, who built it. It was the most important town of one of the four parts into which Macedonia was divided by the Romans in 168 B.C. Instead of "the chief city of part of Macedonia," the best Greek readings have, "a city of the first part of Macedonia." That St. Luke's *μεις* of Macedonia here is a technical term, and particularly associated with Macedonia, is now certain from some ancient Macedonian coins recently discovered with this word on them. Cf. Hogarth, *Authority and Archaeology*, pp. 349-350. **A colony**. It was proclaimed a Roman colony by Augustus, and enjoyed all the privileges of the capital of the Empire.

13. **That there was prayer**; i.e., where prayer was accustomed to be made. The Jews were everywhere, and when they were not in sufficient number to have a synagogue, as apparently in the present case, they held their religious gatherings outside the cities, away from pagan habitations, in *proseuche*, or small oratories. These oratories were usually built on the banks of streams, so as to enable the Jews to observe their various ablutions and purifications.

14. **Worshipped God**; i.e., she was a Jewish proselyte, a pagan by birth.

16. And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain girl, having a pythonical spirit, met us, who brought to her masters much gain by divining.

17. This same following Paul and us, cried out, saying: These men are the servants of the most high God, who preach unto you the way of salvation.

18. And this she did many days. But Paul being grieved, turned, and said to the spirit: I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, to go out from her. And he went out the same hour.

19. But her masters, seeing that the hope of their gain was gone, apprehending Paul and Silas, brought them into the marketplace to the rulers.

20. And presenting them to the magistrates, they said: These men disturb our city, being Jews;

21. And preach a fashion which it is not lawful for us to receive nor observe, being Romans.

16. **A pythonical spirit**; i.e., a divining spirit. Python was a serpent of pagan mythology at Delphi slain by Apollo, who on account of this victory, was thereafter called *Pytheus*. The oracles of Delphi, therefore, which Apollo was supposed to deliver were termed *Pythian*, and afterwards every evil spirit that pretended to know the future was called Pythian. With such an evil spirit this girl was possessed.

17. Most probably God forced the demon possessing this girl to bear witness to Paul and his companions, just as on a former occasion He had constrained the demoniacs to bear witness to Christ (Mark i. 24, 34). What the purpose of this testimony was we do not know, but at any rate it gave Paul a chance to perform a great miracle.

18. **Paul being grieved**; i.e., being wearied (*διαπονηθείς*). **In the name**, etc., means by the authority.

19, 20. **The Rulers**; i.e., the city judges (*ἄρχοντας*). The **Magistrates** were usually two in number in Roman colonies, and were called *duumviri* or praetors. It was their duty to administer justice in the cities. True to the history of the time, St. Luke calls these magistrates *στρατηγοί*.

**Being Jews**. The Jews were hated by the Romans. This was the first persecution of the Church by the Gentiles; but it was on account of pecuniary loss, and not out of hatred for the Christian religion.

21. **Preach a fashion**; i.e., teach customs. Philippi being a Roman colony was governed by Roman laws which forbade the introduction of new religions that were not publicly, or at least

22. And the people ran together against them; and the magistrates rending off their clothes, commanded them to be beaten with rods.

23. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the gaoler to keep them diligently.

24. Who having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

25. And at midnight, Paul and Silas praying, praised God. And they that were in prison, heard them.

26. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and the bands of all were loosed.

27. And the keeper of the prison, awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the doors of the prison open, drawing his sword, would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

28. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying: Do thyself no harm, for we all are here.

29. Then calling for a light, he went in, and trembling, fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas.

30. And bringing them out, he said: Masters, what must I do, that I may be saved?

tacitly, approved (Cicero, *De Leg.* ii. 8). And while the Jewish religion was not only tolerated in Rome, but enjoyed certain privileges, it was nevertheless very easy, because of hatred of the Jews, to stir up the Romans against them.

22. **The people ran together**; i.e., they rose up together against the Apostles, and the magistrates had the Apostles' clothes torn off by lictors, as was customary before flagellation (Livy, viii. 32; Tacitus, *Hist.* iv. 27). Paul could have appealed against this beating that he was a Roman citizen, but he preferred to submit to it out of love for Christ.

23. **Many stripes**, the number of which was not determined by Roman law, but left to the decision of the judges or lictors. Among the Jews scourging was restricted to forty stripes.

24. **In the stocks**; i.e., in pieces of wood containing holes, into which the feet of the prisoners were so fastened that escape was impossible.

27. **Would have killed himself**, in order to avoid the great punishment in store for him for having permitted a prisoner to escape. See on xii. 19.

29, 30. **Fell down**, etc. The soldier was convinced that God had supernaturally intervened in behalf of the Apostles. Perhaps he

31. But they said: Believe in the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

32. And they preached the word of the Lord to him and to all that were in his house.

33. And he, taking them the same hour of the night, washed their stripes, and himself was baptized, and all his house immediately.

34. And when he had brought them into his own house, he laid the table for them, and rejoiced with all his house, believing God.

35. And when the day was come, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

36. And the keeper of the prison told these words to Paul: The magistrates have sent to let you go; now therefore depart, and go in peace.

37. But Paul said to them: They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison: and now do they thrust us out privately? Not so; but let them come,

38. And let us out ourselves. And the serjeants told these words to the magistrates. And they were afraid, hearing that they were Romans.

39. And coming, they besought them; and bringing them out, they desired them to depart out of the city.

had also heard of their sanctity, the doctrine they had been preaching, and the miracle they had wrought in the case of the poor possessed girl; hence his question.

**31. Believe in the Lord Jesus.** See on xiii. 39.

**32. They preached the word, etc.;** i.e., they briefly explained to the keeper and his family the doctrines necessary for salvation. It is not clear whether this took place in the prison, or in the keeper's house; more probably it was in the prison or vestibule of the prison, as would appear from verse 34.

**33.** From the circumstances of time and place it seems more probable that the baptism of the keeper and his family was not by immersion.

**35.** The magistrates gave orders to liberate the prisoners, most likely because the earthquake had filled them with fear of the vengeance of God.

**38, 39.** The Apostles had been unlawfully scourged and imprisoned without a trial; and now St. Paul demands that the same public authority should make reparation by itself declaring the innocence and pardon of those whom it had so illegally treated. It was contrary to Roman law to scourge a Roman citizen, and against justice to condemn and punish anyone without a hearing. Paul insisted on this public acknowledgment of his innocence on account of the faithful of Philippi who might otherwise have been scandal-

40. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and having seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

ized. The **serjeants** (verse 38) were the lictors who had scourged the Apostles, and who attended on the magistrates or praetors and executed their orders.

40. Paul did not at once leave the city, but remained some little time to visit and console the converts. He afterwards from Rome addressed an Epistle to the Philippians in which he emphasized their generosity and devotedness to him.

## CHAPTER XVII

PAUL PREACHES AT THESSALONICA AND AT BEREÄ,  
I-14.

PAUL AT ATHENS, 15-21.

PAUL'S DISCOURSE TO THE ATHENIANS, 22-34.

1. And when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

2. And Paul, according to his custom, went in unto them; and for three sabbath days he reasoned with them out of the scriptures:

3. Declaring and insinuating that the Christ was to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this is Jesus Christ, whom I preach to you.

4. And some of them believed, and were associated to Paul and Silas; and of those that served God, and of the Gentiles a great multitude, and of noble women not a few.

1. **Amphipolis** was the capital of the first of the four parts into which Macedonia was divided by Paulus Emilius. It was about thirty miles southwest of Philippi. A similar journey brought the Apostle to Apollonia, and about thirty-five miles more to Thessalonica, now Saloniki. **Thessalonica** was then the capital of the second part of Macedonia, and a seaport of the highest importance. The Thessalonians were later favored with two Epistles from St. Paul.

2, 3. St. Paul explained to his hearers in the synagogue the prophecies which related to the Messiah, and showed how, in the designs of God, it was necessary that the Messiah should suffer and die and rise again from the dead; and then he applied all this to Christ, and showed how in Him all the prophecies were fulfilled. All this was hardly accomplished in the space of three Sabbaths. From the Apostles' Epistles to the church at Thessalonica we see that the faithful were already a flourishing community there, which could scarcely be the outcome of only three weeks of evangelization. It seems very probable, therefore, that at the end of three weeks St. Paul was forced to vacate the synagogue, but continued to teach in another building, as at Corinth and Ephesus (Acts xviii. 6-7; xix. 8, 9), perhaps for several months.

4. **Those that served God**; i.e., the proselytes to Judaism. Ac-

5. But the Jews, moved with envy, and taking unto them some wicked men of the vulgar sort, and making a tumult, set the city in an uproar; and besetting Jason's house, sought to bring them out unto the people.

6. And not finding them, they drew Jason and certain brethren to the rulers of the city, crying: They that set the city in an uproar, are come hither also;

7. Whom Jason hath received; and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, Jesus.

8. And they stirred up the people, and the rulers of the city hearing these things,

9. And having taken satisfaction of Jason and of the rest, they let them go.

According to the Vulgate there were two chief classes in the Church at Thessalonica: Jewish proselytes and Gentiles. There were also a few Jews by birth who believed, *quidam ex eis*, etc. The Greek reads: "Of devout Greeks a great multitude," which would indicate only one chief class.

5. **The Jews, moved with envy**; i.e., the unbelieving Jews, moved with rage. **The vulgar sort**; i.e., loafers of the market place. **Jason's house** was where the Apostles had been staying.

6. **The rulers**. The name given to these magistrates of the city was *πολιτάρχαι*, *politarchs*, a name found in no less than nineteen inscriptions recently discovered in Saloniki, and in particular in one on a Roman arch of the Vadar gate of Thessalonica itself. The block containing this latter inscription is now one of the treasures of the British Museum. These discoveries show the exactness of St. Luke's information. All scholars now recognize the title, *Politarchs*, as one peculiar to Macedonian use and most accurately reported by St. Luke.

**Set the city**, etc.,—rather, "set the world," etc. (*τὴν οἰκουμένην*). The *urbem* of the Vulgate here must be a copyist's mistake for *orbem*.

7. The unbelieving Jews had most likely heard St. Paul speak of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, and so they made the same accusation against him which before, by a similar quibble, the Jews had made against the Saviour (Luke xxiii. 2; John xix. 12).

9. **Having taken satisfaction**, etc.; i.e., having received assurance that they would not again disturb the public peace or plot against the state, the rulers let them go. Perhaps a sum of money was deposited as bail for the accused.



10. But the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea. Who, when they were come thither, went into the synagogue of the Jews.

11. Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, who received the word with all eagerness, daily searching the scriptures, whether these things were so.

12. And many indeed of them believed, and of honourable women that were Gentiles, and of men not a few.

13. And when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was also preached by Paul at Berea, they came thither also, stirring up and troubling the multitude.

14. And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul, to go unto the sea; but Silas and Timothy remained there.

15. And they that conducted Paul, brought him as far as Athens; and receiving a commandment from him to Silas and Timothy, that they should come to him with all speed, they departed.

10. **Berea** was then the capital of the third part or district of Macedonia, and about fifty miles southwest of Thessalonica.

11. **More noble**; i.e., more generous, better disposed to hear the truth. The people of Berea daily studied and pondered the Scriptures that the Apostles cited in their preaching, and were eager to know the truth.

14. **Unto the sea**; i.e., as far as the sea (ἕως ἑπεί), which is the reading of the Vulgate and of the best MSS. It would seem to imply that Paul did not intend to go farther, but we know that he embarked immediately for Athens.

15. **Athens** was the capital of Attica in the Roman province of Achaia, and in ancient times was the center of art, literature, and science. It was politically subject to Rome, but dominated the whole Empire by the splendor of its culture. Its poets, orators, artists, and philosophers, never before or since equalled, spread their fame over the world, and were then, as they ever have been since, the wonder and admiration of all civilized peoples. When Paul was there, however, Athens had very much declined, and its former magnificence was fast passing away.

**A commandment.** Paul sent a message, by the brethren who had accompanied him, to Silas and Timothy that they should come to Athens with all possible haste.

There is a difficulty here. The present verse seems out of harmony with xviii. 5; and neither the present verse nor xviii. 5 seems to agree with 1 Thessalonians iii. 1, 2. Here in verses 14, 15 Paul

16. Now whilst Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred within him, seeing the city wholly given to idolatry.

17. He disputed, therefore, in the synagogue with the Jews, and with them that served God, and in the market-place, every day with them that were there.

18. And certain philosophers of the Epicureans and of the Stoics disputed with him; and some said: What is it, that this word sower would say? But others: He seemeth to be a setter forth of new gods; because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

leaves Timothy and Silas at Berea with a commandment to come to him at Athens. But in xviii. 5 it is said that Timothy and Silas came out of Macedonia to Paul at Corinth; and in 1 Thessalonians iii. 1, 2 we are told that Timothy is sent by Paul out of Athens to Thessalonica, and no mention is made of Silas whatever. *Answer:* Timothy and Silas came from Berea to Paul at Athens, as commanded. Paul sent Timothy from Athens to Thessalonica to investigate the condition of the Church there, and Silas was despatched to some other part of Macedonia. Later, both Timothy and Silas returned from Macedonia and came to Paul at Corinth, as stated in xviii. 5. St. Luke in the Acts has omitted the coming of the two disciples to Paul at Athens, leaving it to be understood that they did so, as commanded; and St. Paul, in 1 Thessalonians iii. 1, 2, did not consider it to his purpose to say where Silas was sent from Athens when Timothy was ordered to go to Thessalonica. The failure of two or more sacred writers to give a full account of details, or a complete enumeration of all the events in a series, is no proof of a contradiction between those writers.

16. **Given to idolatry**,—rather, filled with idols. Athens was filled with temples, altars, and statues of the gods whom the people worshipped. There were more temples and statues in Athens, according to Livy, than in all the rest of Greece.

17. Every Sabbath Paul was disputing in the synagogue with the Jews and proselytes, and during the other days of the week he argued in the market-place or forum with all whom he met. The market-place, or *Agora*, as it is called in the Greek, was the center of public life and activity. There the politicians, the men of letters, and the philosophers used to gather for discussion and interchange of views.

18. **Epicureans . . . Stoics.** These were two of the four principal philosophical schools of Greece, the other two being the

19. And taking him, they brought him to the Areopagus, saying: May we know what this new doctrine is, which thou speakest of?

20. For thou bringest in certain new things to our ears. We would know therefore what these things mean.

21. (Now all the Athenians, and strangers that were there, employed themselves in nothing else, but either in telling or in hearing some new thing.)

Academicians and the Peripatetics. These schools arose in the third and fourth centuries B.C. The Epicureans were the disciples of Epicurus (341-270 B.C.). They denied the immortality of the soul, the existence of God and of Providence, and taught that man's supreme happiness consists in sensible pleasure. They explained the origin of all things by a fortuitous combination of atoms.

The Stoics, founded by Zeno of Citium (c. 342-270 B.C.), derived their name from the *portico* or *porch* (Gr. *στοά*) where their founder used to give his lectures. They were pantheists and fatalists, and taught that self-denial or indifference to pain was the highest wisdom and virtue, that suicide was lawful, and that after death the soul would be absorbed into the Spirit of the Universe. Like the Pharisees, they despised the poor and ignorant, and sought only the glory of men. Obviously the teachings of the Epicureans and Stoics were directly contrary to Christianity.

The Academicians were followers of Plato (427-347 B.C.). They derived their name from the *Academy*, or public pleasure-ground, including a gymnasium, near Athens, where Plato taught philosophy.

The Peripatetics were founded by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), who taught in the Lyceum gymnasium of Athens. Their name, which means *going about*, was derived from the mode of teaching of their master who used to give his lectures and instructions walking about among his students and hearers. The doctrines of Plato and Aristotle were not much opposed to Christian teachings. At any rate, it was a very learned and a very philosophical atmosphere in which St. Paul found himself at Athens.

This word-sower, *σπερμολόγος*, literally, *seed-picker*, *grain-collector*, which meant one who had picked up a few scraps or disconnected bits of knowledge here and there, and gave them out without method or order.

19. **Areopagus**, — literally, the *hill of Mars*, situated in the center of Athens. It was the great judgment-seat of Athens, and its court had supreme jurisdiction in religious matters.

22. But Paul standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious.

23. For passing by, and seeing your idols, I found an altar also, on which was written: To the unknown God. What therefore you worship, without knowing it, that I preach to you:

24. God, who made the world, and all things therein; he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25. Neither is he served with men's hands, as though he needed any thing; seeing it is he who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things:

26. And hath made of one, all mankind, to dwell upon the whole face of the earth, determining appointed times, and the limits of their habitation.

22, 23. In this introduction to his lofty discourse St. Paul compliments his hearers on being unusually religious in character, but somewhat too superstitious, i.e., too much given to the worship of demon-gods (*δεισιδαιμονεστέρους*).

**To the unknown God.** The Athenians worshipped many gods and goddesses, and fearing lest some one of the gods should be overlooked by them, they had an altar erected "to the unknown god." Ancient writers tell us that there were a number of altars in Athens dedicated to unknown gods. St. Jerome saw at Athens one of these altars with the inscription: *Diis Asiae et Europae, Diis ignotis et peregrinis* (Ad Tit., i. 12). St. Paul takes advantage of this to make known to his audience the nature of the one true God.

24, 25. In these verses St. Paul shows the difference in nature and attributes between the true God and the gods of the Athenians. The true God is above all things, has created all, sustains all, and is not in need of any thing, although all His creatures are obliged to serve Him and to do Him homage.

26. **Hath made of one, all mankind.** The Athenians considered themselves as distinct from the rest of the human race in origin, culture, learning, etc.; and now St. Paul reminds them of the true doctrine, that all men have sprung from one original type, the same in blood and nature, and that consequently all men belong to the self-same human family.

**Determining appointed times, etc.;** i. e., although the human race is essentially one in nature and origin, God has determined the different times, periods, and epochs in which the various nations shall live and flourish, as well as the different countries or parts of the earth's surface which they shall occupy.

27. That they should seek God, if happily they may feel after him or find him, although he be not far from every one of us:

28. For in him we live, and move, and are; as some also of your own poets said: For we are also his offspring.

29. Being therefore the offspring of God, we must not suppose the divinity to be like unto gold, or silver, or stone, the graving of art, and device of man.

30. And God indeed having winked at the times of this ignorance, now declareth unto men, that all should every where do penance.

31. Because he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in equity, by the man whom he hath appointed; giving faith to all, by raising him up from the dead.

32. And when they had heard of the resurrection of the dead, some indeed mocked, but others said: We will hear thee again concerning this matter.

33. So Paul went out from among them.

34. But certain men adhering to him, did believe; among whom was also Dionysius, the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

27, 28. In these verses St. Paul shows the object of God's Providence in governing the world, and in determining the times and places of our earthly existence, namely, that we may learn to know and love God. This, he says, ought not to be difficult, since God is nearer to us than the air we breathe; He is our life, our strength, our support. We have a nature similar to God's, being His offspring. The words, *For we are also his offspring*, are from the poet Aratus, a Cilician, in his book *Phaenomena*, 5 (third century B.C.). They are substantially found in several other Greek poets; hence St. Paul uses the plural, "some of your own poets."

29. If, therefore, we are similar to God, although much inferior to Him, as the creature is inferior to the Creator, it follows that God cannot be like the things that are inferior to us, such as the idols of gold and silver and stone which the Athenians worshipped.

30, 31. Here St. Paul tells his audience that God has hitherto borne patiently with the ignorance, superstition, and sin of the nations; but that now He commands all to do penance and make reparation for their sins, because a day of reckoning is coming. **The man whom he hath appointed** to be the judge of men is none other than Jesus Christ, in whom all should believe, on account of the miracle of His Resurrection from the dead. St. Paul must have spoken much more at length about our Lord, about His Passion, death, and Resurrection; but St. Luke has not given it to us.

32-34. While some, probably the Epicureans, laughed at the doc-

trine of the Resurrection, and others, like the Stoics, were not then much interested, there were some who did believe. Dionysius was a member of the court of the Areopagus, and therefore a man of prestige. According to a tradition given by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* iii. 4, and iv. 23) he became the first Bishop of Athens.

## CHAPTER XVIII

PAUL ESTABLISHES THE CHURCH AT CORINTH, 1-11.

PAUL IS SUMMONED BEFORE GALLIO, THE PROCONSUL,  
BUT IS LIBERATED, 12-17.

PAUL GOES TO EPHESUS, THEN UP TO JERUSALEM,  
AND FINALLY BACK TO ANTIOCH, 18-22.

FROM ANTIOCH HE GOES TO VISIT THE CHURCHES  
IN GALATIA AND PHRYGIA, 23.

THE MINISTRY OF APOLLO, 24-28.

1. After these things, departing from Athens, he came to Corinth.

2. And finding a certain Jew, named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with Priscilla his wife, (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome,) he came to them.

3. And because he was of the same trade, he remained with them, and wrought; (now they were tentmakers by trade.)

1. St. Paul's labors at Athens were not very fruitful, and so he soon passed on to Corinth, the capital of Achaia. Corinth was one of the richest, and one of the most corrupt cities of ancient times. Situated on a narrow isthmus between two seas, it was the center of all the trade between the East and the West.

2. Aquila and Priscilla, although Latin in name, were Jews by birth. They were perhaps converted to Christianity in Rome by St. Peter, and were expelled from the Eternal City, together with other Christians and Jews, by the edict of Claudius. The cause of this expulsion, we know from Suetonius (*Claud.* 25), was the constant tumults excited among the Jews by "Chrestus," as the pagan historian, either through ignorance or contempt, called the Saviour. The Jews at Rome as elsewhere caused public disturbances by attacking the Christians. Claudius, not distinguishing between Jews and Christians, drove out both classes. The edict, however, was soon recalled, or left unenforced, because Aquila and Priscilla were back in Rome when Paul addressed his Epistle to the Romans (cf. Rom. xvi. 3).

3. **The same trade.** Manual labor was held in great esteem among the Jews, and it was customary for all Jewish boys to learn a

4. And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, bringing in the name of the Lord Jesus; and he persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.

5. And when Silas and Timothy were come from Macedonia, Paul was earnest in preaching, testifying to the Jews, that Jesus is the Christ.

6. But they gainsaying and blaspheming, he shook his garments, and said to them: Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.

7. And departing thence, he entered into the house of a certain man, named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house was adjoining to the synagogue.

8. And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord, with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.

9. And the Lord said to Paul in the night, by a vision: Do not fear, but speak; and hold not thy peace,

10. Because I am with thee: and no man shall set upon thee, to hurt thee; for I have much people in this city.

11. And he stayed there a year and six months, teaching among them the word of God.

12. But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul, and brought him to the judgment seat,

trade. Even the rabbis, when not at their studies, were accustomed to apply themselves to some trade. Tent-making, or the making of the material for tents, was one of the most popular trades, especially in Cilicia. Tents were used very much by the Jews when travelling. They were made out of the skins of goats or camels.

4. **Bringing in the name of the Lord Jesus.** These words are wanting in some of the best Greek MSS., but they serve to show how St. Paul brought in the name of our Lord only gradually, so as not to provoke too much opposition.

5. Paul had left Silas and Timothy at Berea (xvii. 15), but later Timothy visited his master at Athens, and was sent by him to visit the Church at Thessalonica (1 Thess. iii. 2, 6-8). Returning from this mission Timothy joined Silas, and the two went to Paul at Corinth. From the visit of his two disciples Paul derived new courage in preaching the Gospel. See above, on xvii. 15.

6. See xiii. 51. St. Paul declares that he is free from the guilt of the ruin and damnation which the Jews were bringing upon themselves by rejecting the Gospel.

7. The name **Titus** is wanting in most of the Greek MSS.

8. **Crispus** was baptized by Paul himself (1 Cor. i. 14).

12. **Gallio**, whose earlier name was Marcus Annaeus Novatus, **Worshipped God** means that the man was a proselyte of Judaism.



13. Saying: This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law.

14. And when Paul was beginning to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews: If it were some matter of injustice, or an heinous deed, O Jews, I should with reason bear with you.

15. But if they be questions of word and names, and of your law, look you to it: I will not be judge of such things.

16. And he drove them from the judgment seat.

17. And all laying hold on Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, beat him before the judgment seat; and Gallio cared for none of those things.

18. But Paul, when he had stayed yet many days, taking his leave of the brethren, sailed thence into Syria (and with him Priscilla and Aquila), having shorn his head in Cenchræ: for he had a vow.

was the brother of Seneca, the philosopher. His assumed name was taken from Gallio, the famous rhetorician, by whom he was adopted. Achaia was the Roman province embracing all of Greece proper and Peloponnesus. Gallio became proconsul of Achaia in the summer of A.D. 51.

13. **Contrary to the law;** i.e., to the Law of Moses, as appears from the two following verses. The Roman law freely permitted the Jews to practise their religion (Josephus, *Antiq.* xiv. 10, 20-24).

14-16. Gallio replies to the accusers of Paul by saying that if there were question of some crime or grievous offense he would hear them; but if the question is one of words, names, or doctrines, whether, namely, Jesus was the Messiah or not, it does not pertain to him to settle it.

17. **Sosthenes, the ruler, etc.** Sosthenes had been the leader and promoter of many disturbances among the Jews, and now, when Gallio had contemptuously dismissed them without a hearing, he was pounced upon and severely beaten by all the Gentiles who were present in the court. It is uncertain whether this was the Sosthenes who was later converted to Christianity, and of whom St. Paul speaks in 1 Cor. i. 1.

18. **Having shorn his head.** Some think these words refer to Aquila; but the context shows they refer to Paul, as also the majority of interpreters understand them. It is disputed whether the vow made by St. Paul was only an ordinary one to offer victims in the Temple at Jerusalem, either as a thank offering or as a prayer for deliverance from danger; or whether it was the Nazarite vow (Num. vi. 1-21). That it was not the latter seems probable, because one who had made this vow was not allowed to shave his

19. And he came to Ephesus, and left them there. But he himself entering into the synagogue, disputed with the Jews.

20. And when they desired him, that he would tarry a longer time, he consented not;

21. But taking his leave, and saying: I will return to you again, God willing, he departed from Ephesus.

22. And going down to Cæsarea, he went up to Jerusalem, and saluted the church, and so came down to Antioch.

23. And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went through the country of Galatia and Phrygia, in order, confirming all the disciples.

24. Now a certain Jew, named Apollo, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus, one mighty in the scriptures.

head until he had made his offering in the Temple at Jerusalem. It is argued, however, that St. Paul did not *shave* his head at this time, but only cropped his hair.

**Cenchra**, or Cenchreae, was an eastern port of Corinth on the Saronic Gulf.

19. **Ephesus**, a very flourishing commercial city situated at the mouth of the Caystrus river, was the capital of the Roman province of Proconsular Asia. It was celebrated for its wondrous temple of Diana. Being very rich, it was also very corrupt.

21. **And saying.** Immediately after these words many Greek MSS. have the following: "It is altogether necessary that I celebrate the coming feast in Jerusalem." What this feast was we do not know, but most probably it was either the Pasch or Pentecost. The vow he had made was a special reason why St. Paul wished to be in Jerusalem for the approaching feast.

22. From Ephesus Paul sailed to Caesarea in Palestine and thence proceeded by land to Jerusalem, saluted the Church there, and then returned to Antioch in Syria. The expression, *ascendit, he went up*, of the Vulgate, is the ordinary phrase to express a visit to Jerusalem. Cf. Matt. xx. 18; Mark x. 33; Luke ii. 42; John ii. 13. This was St. Paul's fourth visit to Jerusalem after his conversion.

23. We do not know how long St. Paul remained at Antioch before setting out on his third missionary journey. But starting from there, with Timothy and Erastus as companions, he began his third journey by visiting the churches of Galatia and Phrygia, about A.D. 55. See above, on xvi. 6.

24. **Apollo** was an Alexandrian Jew, very learned in the Scriptures, and perhaps in philosophy also. The Jews of Alexandria

25. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, spoke, and taught diligently the things that are of Jesus, knowing only the baptism of John.

26. This man therefore began to speak boldly in the synagogue. Whom when Priscilla and Aquila had heard, they took him to them, and expounded to him the way of the Lord more diligently.

27. And whereas he was desirous to go to Achaia, the brethren exhorting, wrote to the disciples to receive him. Who, when he was come, helped them much who had believed.

28. For with much vigour he convinced the Jews openly, shewing by the scriptures, that Jesus is the Christ.

gave great attention to the study of the Scriptures, and on account of their allegorical method of interpretation, and their efforts to reconcile Scripture and Greek philosophy, they formed a school very different from that of Jerusalem.

25. This man was instructed, etc. Apollo had received considerable instruction concerning our Lord as the Messiah through the preaching of John the Baptist, which perhaps was given him by some other Jew of the Dispersion who had been a disciple of John. John's preaching had made a deep impression even on the Jews outside of Palestine, but as they were far removed from the scene of the Saviour's labors, it was not possible for them to know much about the religion of Christ.

26. They took him, etc. Aquila and Priscilla saw that Apollo's knowledge of faith was imperfect, and so they took him into their own house, gave him more complete instruction, and doubtless baptized him.

27. To go to Achaia; i.e., to Corinth. Some of the faithful of Corinth were then at Ephesus, and having heard Apollo preach they desired him to come to Corinth. The Christians at Ephesus approved of the idea, and gave letters recommending Apollo to the faithful at Corinth.

Helped them much who had believed; i.e., the learning and eloquence of Apollo were of great advantage to the faithful at Corinth, and helped much to spread a knowledge of the Gospel there.

In the Greek, after the phrase, "who had believed," is added, "through grace," — which may mean that the faith of those who believed was the result of grace, and so a gift of God; or that the success of Apollo at Corinth was due to a special gift of God.

## CHAPTER XIX

PAUL FOUNDS THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS, 1-12.

THE PUNISHMENT OF THE JEWISH EXORCISTS, 13-17.

THE BOOKS ON MAGIC ARE BURNED, 18-22.

THE SILVERSMITHS EXCITE A TUMULT AGAINST PAUL,  
23-40.

1. And it came to pass, while Apollo was at Corinth, that Paul having passed through the upper coasts, came to Ephesus, and found certain disciples.

2. And he said to them: Have you received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? But they said to him: We have not so much as heard whether there be a Holy Ghost.

3. And he said: In what then were you baptized? Who said: In John's baptism.

4. Then Paul said: John baptized the people with the baptism of penance, saying: that they should believe in him who was to come after him, that is to say, in Jesus.

1. **The upper coasts**; i.e., the mountainous parts of Galatia and Phrygia (xviii. 23). **Certain disciples**, who, like Apollo, had been insufficiently instructed by John the Baptist, or some one of his disciples, and who, consequently, knew that Jesus was the Messiah, but little more than that.

2. **We have not . . . heard whether**, etc. This cannot mean that John's disciples were ignorant of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity of whom John himself had spoken (John i. 33), and of whom the Old Testament often spoke (Gen. i. 2; Ps. cxliv. 29, 30; Isa. xxxii. 15; xi. 2, 3; 2 Kings xxiii. 2, etc.); but only that they had not yet received the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation, or did not know that it was possible so to receive Him. This interpretation is strengthened by the fact that these disciples of John's were most probably Jews, familiar with the Old Testament, and not pagans, as some have thought; we have no trace of any disciples belonging to John among the pagans.

3, 4. Since it was customary to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation immediately after Baptism, and since the disciples seemed

5. Having heard these things, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

6. And when Paul had imposed his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

7. And all the men were about twelve.

8. And entering into the synagogue, he spoke boldly for the space of three months, disputing and exhorting concerning the kingdom of God.

9. But when some were hardened, and believed not, speaking evil of the way of the Lord, before the multitude, departing from them, he separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Gentiles.

10. And this continued for the space of two years, so that all they who

11. And God wrought by the hand of Paul more than common miracles.

12. So that even there were brought from his body to the sick, handkerchiefs and aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the wicked spirits went out of them.

13. Now some also of the Jewish exorcists who went about, attempted to invoke over them that had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying: I conjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth.

to know nothing about Confirmation, St. Paul was moved to ask what baptism they had received. The baptism of John was only a preparation for the Baptism of Christ.

5. **They were baptized**; i.e., they received the Sacrament of Baptism.

6. **Imposed his hands**; i.e., administered the Sacrament of Confirmation.

**They spoke with tongues**, etc. See on ii. 17; viii. 16; x. 46; xiii. 1.

9. **He separated the disciples**; i.e., he did not permit those who were well disposed any more to frequent the synagogue, but took them to the school of Tyrannus, and there instructed them. **Tyrannus** was a schoolmaster, perhaps a Jewish rabbi, or a pagan rhetorician. He placed his school at Paul's disposal several hours every day of the week.

10. **Asia**, Proconsular, of which Ephesus was the capital.

12. **Handkerchiefs and aprons**, which were used by St. Paul when at his trade. While in Ephesus he earned his living by tent-making. In this verse we have a valid argument in favor of the use of relics in the Church.

13. **Jewish exorcists**; i.e., certain Jews who professed to have the power of casting out devils by invoking the name of God.

14. And there were certain men, seven sons of Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest, that did this.

15. But the wicked spirit, answering, said to them: Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?

16. And the man in whom the wicked spirit was, leaping upon them, and mastering them both, prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17. And this became known to all the Jews and the Gentiles that dwelt at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18. And many of them that believed, came confessing and declaring their deeds.

Some of these in the time of Christ did cast out evil spirits by the invocation of God's name, as we learn from the Gospels (Mark ix. 37; Luke ix. 49); but there were many impostors who pretended to have received from Solomon certain magical powers, and these went from city to city practising their art only for the sake of money. Such were those who came to Ephesus and tried to imitate the miracles of Paul by invoking the name of Jesus over the possessed.

14. **Seven sons.** Some MSS. have **Two sons**, which would seem more in conformity with verse 16. **A chief priest.** Sceva was called a "chief priest," perhaps because he was head of one of the twenty-four sacerdotal families (1 Paral. xxiv. 1-19).

15, 16. The evil spirit was well aware of the power of the name of Jesus and of the sanctity of St. Paul, but he knew nothing about these impostors. He showed his contempt for them and their pretended powers by leaping upon them and wounding them.

18. **Confessing . . . their deeds.** There is question here, not of a mere general, but of a particular and detailed, declaration of sins. Whether it was public or private does not appear; but the common opinion is that the confession made was sacramental. In favor of this opinion it is argued that the Greek participle, *πεπιστευκότων*, being in the perfect tense, must refer to those who had the faith already, i.e., to the faithful, or the baptized, and not to those who on this occasion were confessing their sins in preparation for Baptism. Everywhere else in Acts the expression *οἱ πεπιστευότες*, means the faithful who had already received Baptism (cf. Acts xv. 5; xviii. 27; xxi. 20, 25). See F. P. LeBuffe, S.J., *Eccl. Review*, March, 1915, pp. 343 ff.

19. And many of them who had followed curious arts, brought together their books, and burnt them before all; and counting the price of them, they found the money to be fifty thousand pieces of silver.

20. So mightily grew the word of God, and was confirmed.

21. And when these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying: After I have been there, I must see Rome also.

22. And sending into Macedonia two of them that ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, he himself remained for a time in Asia.

23. Now at that time there arose no small disturbance about the way of the Lord.

24. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver temples for Diana, brought no small gain to the craftsmen;

25. Whom he calling together, with the workmen of like occupation, said: Sirs, you know that our gain is by this trade;

26. And you see and hear, that this Paul by persuasion hath drawn away a great multitude, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all Asia, saying: They are not gods which are made by hands.

27. So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought, but also the temple of great Diana shall be reputed for nothing; yea, and her majesty shall begin to be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28. Having heard these things, they were full of anger, and cried out, saying: Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

19. **Curious arts;** i.e., magic, superstitious practices, and the like.

**Fifty thousand pieces of silver.** These pieces of silver were most likely Attic *drachmae*, equivalent to Roman *denarii*, each worth about 17 cents in our money. The value, therefore, of all the books burnt was about \$8,500 in our money. It was a large sum, which showed the sincerity of the repentance of those converted.

21. **In the spirit;** i.e., in his mind. Paul's resolution was probably from the promptings of the Holy Ghost. He purposed to visit the churches founded on his preceding journey in Macedonia and Achaia, and then go to Jerusalem with the alms he had collected for the Church there. Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 1-5; 2 Cor. viii. 1 ff.

22. Before leaving Ephesus St. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia to prepare the Church there for his coming visit, and to collect alms (1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 2; 2 Tim. iv. 20).

23. **The way of the Lord;** i.e., the Gospel, or doctrines of Christ, which Paul was preaching.

24. **Silver temples;** i.e., small shrines in silver, representing the

29. And the whole city was filled with confusion; and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30. And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31. And some also of the rulers of Asia, who were his friends, sent unto him, desiring that he would not venture himself into the theatre.

32. Now some cried one thing, some another. For the assembly was confused, and the greater part knew not for what cause they were come together.

33. And they drew forth Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews thrusting him forward. And Alexander beckoning with his hand for silence, would have given the people satisfaction.

temple of Diana, which the pagans used to wear as amulets around their necks to protect themselves against evil. Diana, the goddess of the moon, was also the goddess of groves, forests, and hunters. The temple erected to her at Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the world.

The craftsmen were the workers employed in making the small statues or shrines representing the wondrous temple of Diana.

29. **They rushed . . . into the theatre.** The people were doubtless in search of Paul, and not having found him, they caught two of his companions whom they wished to punish. Theatres among the Greeks were used not only for spectacular entertainments, but also for public meetings of various kinds. The theatre of Ephesus was one of the largest in the world, being able to accommodate from twenty-five to thirty thousand persons.

31. **Rulers of Asia, or Asiarchs.** These were public functionaries whose duty it was to preside over the religious feasts and games of Asia. Their name is found in many inscriptions of Ephesus and on money of the time, which is a proof of the historical character of St. Luke's narrative.

33. **Alexander.** It is uncertain who this man was and why the Jews put him forward. Some say he was a Jewish Christian, whom the Jews wished to make the object of all the fury of the crowd; others think he was a Jew, who, because of his eloquence and influence, was put forward to meet the crowd and defend his fellow Jews by showing that they too were opposed to the doctrines of Paul.



34. But as soon as they perceived him to be a Jew, all with one voice, for the space of about two hours, cried out: Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

35. And when the town clerk had appeased the multitudes, he said: Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great Diana, and of Jupiter's offspring.

36. For as much therefore as these things cannot be contradicted, you ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37. For you have brought hither these men, who are neither guilty of sacrilege, nor of blasphemy against your goddess.

38. But if Demetrius and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts of justice are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another.

39. And if you inquire after any other matter, it may be decided in a lawful assembly.

34. The audience recognized Alexander to be a Jew, and they knew that all Jews were opposed to the worship of Diana; hence instead of listening to what he might say, they proclaimed the more the praises of Diana.

35. The town clerk (*γραμματεὺς*); i.e., the public functionary entrusted with the affairs of the city, keeping the archives, etc. He was a man of great authority and influence. From an inscription found in Ephesus we learn that the same person was at once Asiarch and clerk of the people. The exactitude with which St. Luke is able to designate proconsuls, rulers of provinces, and magistrates, so that the Hellenists could never catch him in error, is an admirable proof of the thoroughness of his knowledge. Worshipper,—rather, “a keeper of the temple,” “a sacristan” (*νεωκόρος*, from *νεὸς* for *ναός*, *temple*; and *κορεῖν*, *to clean, sweep*), i.e., a guardian of the shrine of Diana, which Ephesus was considered to be. Jupiter's offspring,—rather “that fell from Jove” (*τοῦ διοπετοῦς*, the term *ἀγάλματος*, *image*, being understood). The Ephesians believed that the image or statue of Diana which they worshipped had “fallen down from heaven.” From inscriptions and on money, signified the old wooden statue which was supposed to Diana. The term *διοπετής*, which is also found in inscriptions and on money, signified the old wooden statue which was supposed to represent the authentic form of the goddess, and which was believed to have “fallen down from heaven.”

38. Proconsuls. The meaning is that Asia, like all other Roman provinces, had its proconsul, not that there were several in Ephesus, the capital of the Roman province of Asia.

40. For we are even in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no man guilty (of whom we may give account) of this concourse. And when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.

40. The Roman law was very severe against those who were guilty of starting or taking part in riots or tumults.

## CHAPTER XX

PAUL PASSES THROUGH MACEDONIA AND GREECE, 1-6.

AT TROAS EUTYCHUS IS RAISED TO LIFE, 7-12.

PAUL GOES FROM TROAS TO MILETUS, 13-16.

PAUL'S FAREWELL DISCOURSE TO THE ANCIENTS AT  
EPHESUS, 17-38.

1. And after the tumult was ceased, Paul calling to him the disciples, and exhorting them, took his leave, and set forward to go into Macedonia.

2. And when he had gone over those parts, and had exhorted them with many words, he came into Greece;

3. Where, when he had spent three months, the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria; so he took a resolution to return through Macedonia.

4. And there accompanied him Sopater the son of Pyrrhus, of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus, and Secundus, and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

1. Took his leave, — literally, "having embraced them." During his stay in Ephesus, St. Paul wrote his first Epistle to the Corinthians, and sent Titus to visit the Church in Corinth.

2. Paul first went to visit the churches he had established in Macedonia at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Illyricum (Rom. xv. 19); and afterwards to Greece, i.e., to the southern part of Greece, called Achaia.

3. Three months, which were mostly spent at Corinth, and during which he wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xv. 25; xvi. 1, 23). At this time many Jews were going from Corinth to Jerusalem for the Pasch, and some of them had planned to kill St. Paul during the voyage.

4. And there accompanied him as far as Asia, as we have it in the Greek. The Vulgate omits the addition, "as far as Asia." It would seem that the seven disciples here mentioned accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem; they doubtless had been sent by the various churches which St. Paul had founded, as representatives to carry alms to the poor brethren in Jerusalem. Cf. 1 Cor. xvi. 3; 2 Cor. viii. 1; Rom. xv. 26.

5. These going before, stayed for us at Troas.

6. But we sailed from Philippi after the days of the Azymes, and came to them to Troas in five days, where we abode seven days.

7. And on the first day of the week, when we were assembled to break bread, Paul discoursed with them, being to depart on the morrow: and he continued his speech until midnight.

8. And there were a great number of lamps in the upper chamber where we were assembled.

9. And a certain young man named Eutychus, sitting on the window, being oppressed with a deep sleep, (as Paul was long preaching,) by occasion of his sleep fell from the third loft down, and was taken up dead.

10. To whom, when Paul had gone down, he laid himself upon him, and embracing him, said: Be not troubled, for his soul is in him.

11. Then going up, and breaking bread and tasting, and having talked a long time to them, until daylight, so he departed.

12. And they brought the youth alive, and were not a little comforted.

13. But we, going aboard the ship, sailed to Assos, being there to take in Paul; for so he had appointed, himself purposing to travel by land.

14. And when he had met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

5, 6. The use of the first person plural in these verses shows that St. Luke had now again joined St. Paul. They were at Philippi, the place where they had been last together. **The days of the azymes**; i.e., the seven days of the Pasch, during which the Jews ate unleavened bread. See on Matthew xxvi. 17 ff.

7. **The first day of the week**, or Sunday, which even in those early days the Christians observed as a holy day in memory of Christ's Resurrection. **To break bread**, means to celebrate the Eucharist, which took place in the evening. That there is question here of the Eucharistic celebration is generally admitted by all commentators, Protestant as well as Catholic.

10. **Laid himself upon him**, praying, as Elias and Eliseus in similar circumstances had done before (3 Kings xvii. 21; 4 Kings iv. 34). The man was miraculously raised to life by the prayer of St. Paul.

11. The dead man being restored to life, St. Paul continued the celebration of the Eucharist, after which he also **tasted**, or partook of, the Agape or love-feast which usually accompanied the celebration of the Eucharist in the early Church. It seems there was a flourishing Christian community at Troas, and St. Paul gave them the benefit of a long instruction before leaving them, perhaps for the last time, as he thought.

15. And sailing thence, the day following we came over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos; and the day following we came to Miletus.

16. For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, lest he should be stayed any time in Asia. For he hasted, if it were possible for him, to keep the day of Pentecost at Jerusalem.

17. And sending from Miletus to Ephesus, he called the ancients of the church.

18. And when they were come to him, and were together, he said to them: You know from the first day that I came into Asia, in what manner I have been with you, for all the time,

19. Serving the Lord with all humility, and with tears, and temptations which befell me by the conspiracies of the Jews;

20. How I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you, but have preached it to you, and taught you publicly, and from house to house.

21. Testifying both to Jews and Gentiles penance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

22. And now, behold, being bound in the spirit, I go to Jerusalem: not knowing the things which shall befall me there:

23. Save that the Holy Ghost in every city witnesseth to me, saying: That bands and afflictions wait for me at Jerusalem.

24. But I fear none of these things, neither do I count my life more precious than myself, so that I may consummate my course and the ministry of the word which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

15. Arrived at Samos, but he tarried at Trogyllium, a promontory opposite Samos, as we learn from the Greek reading. Miletus was the harbor of Ephesus.

17. The ancients. It is disputed whether these were the Bishops of the districts about Ephesus, or only the priests of some of the principal churches. More probably the term "ancients" here refers both to the Bishops and the priests of the neighboring cities. That there were Bishops included in the term "ancients" seems clear from verse 28.

18-21. In these verses St. Paul opens his discourse by recalling to the minds of the Bishops and priests gathered together, his ministry at Ephesus. He dwells on his labors and trials in their midst, and on his tender solicitude for all his spiritual children. This he did, not from pride, but out of regard for those whom he was about to leave, in order that they might remain faithful and be true to the doctrine he had preached to them.

22-24. In this, the second part of his discourse, St. Paul says he is going to Jerusalem, and that he is ready and willing to suffer for the sake of the Gospel anything that God may send him to

25. And now behold, I know that all you, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

26. Wherefore I take you to witness this day, that I am clear from the blood of all men;

27. For I have not spared to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

28. Take heed to yourselves, and to the whole flock, wherein the Holy Ghost hath placed you bishops, to rule the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

bear. **Bound in the spirit** (verse 22) may mean under the impulse of the Holy Ghost, or, by his own determination. The Holy Ghost, either by direct revelation, or through the prophets of the Church (xxi. 11) in every city, testified to St. Paul that great afflictions were in store for him; but the Apostle was undaunted, preferring to fulfil his ministry than to save his own life.

25-35. In these verses, which conclude his discourse, the Apostle gives his hearers some final admonitions and instructions. He warns them of the dangers ahead and exhorts them to fidelity. He seemed to feel that he should not see them again, but we know that he did very probably again visit the churches of Asia Minor after his imprisonment in Rome (1 Tim. i. 3; 2 Tim. i. 15, 18; iv. 13). From the Holy Ghost he knew that many sufferings awaited him at Jerusalem, but what their final issue should be he did not know.

Since St. Paul seemed convinced that he would never again return to Asia Minor, it is difficult to explain the actual visit which later he most probably did make to the churches there. Patrizzi says that on this occasion the Apostle spoke, "*Non divino afflatu, sed prout futurum esse putabat.*"

26, 27. Taking leave of them for what he considers to be the last time, St. Paul calls his audience to witness that he has done his duty by them, and that if any of them are lost, it will not be his fault; he has spared no labors, no sufferings to make known to them the things necessary for salvation.

28. St. Paul admonishes the pastors present to imitate him by first sanctifying themselves, and then the flock which the Holy Ghost has committed to them. He explicitly mentions the **bishops**, i.e., the "overseers," "superintendents," who have the special duty of guiding and directing the flock of Christ. He speaks of the Church as having been purchased with God's own blood. Since, then, the Church was *de facto* purchased with the blood of Christ,

29. I know that, after my departure, ravening wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

30. And of your own selves shall arise men speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

31. Therefore watch, keeping in memory, that for three years I ceased not, with tears to admonish every one of you night and day.

35. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring you ought to be able to build up, and to give an inheritance among all the sanctified.

33. I have not coveted any man's silver, gold, or apparel, as

34. You yourselves know: for such things as were needful for me and them that are with me, these hands have furnished.

35. I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the word of the Lord Jesus, how he said: It is a more blessed thing to give, rather than to receive.

36. And when he had said these things, kneeling down, he prayed with them all.

37. And there was much weeping among them all; and falling on the neck of Paul, they kissed him,

38. Being grieved most of all for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more. And they brought him on his way to the ship.

it follows that Christ is God. Cf. Matt. xxvi. 28; Luke xxii. 20; 1 Cor. vi. 20; 1 Peter i. 19.

29. **Ravening wolves**, such as the Judaisers and Gnostics, who caused so much trouble and sorrow in the early Church. Cf. 2 Cor. xi. 13-15; Gal. i. 7 ff.; 1 Tim. i. 19; Rom. xvi. 18-20.

30. **Of your own selves**. Perhaps the reference here is to Hy-meneus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1-20).

31. **For three years**, in round numbers. St. Paul taught in the synagogue at Ephesus for three months (xix. 8), and in the school of Tyrannus for two years (xix. 10).

32. **The word of his grace** means the Gospel. **To build up** means to bring to perfection their own sanctification and that of their flocks by increasing in faith and all other virtues, so that they may become partakers of the rewards of God's saints in heaven.

33, 34. St. Paul knew that those who preach the Gospel and serve the altar are deserving of the support from the faithful necessary to carry on their work; but in order not to give his enemies a chance to accuse him of seeking material profit from spiritual labors, he earned his own living and supported his companions with his own hands.

35. **The weak**, in view of the two preceding verses, probably refers to the spiritually infirm; i.e., to those who would be scandal-

ized to see spiritual labors turned to material gain. Some, however, understand "the weak" to refer to the poor and needy, and this opinion is made very probable by the second half of the verse. The sentence, **it is more blessed to give**, etc., is not in any of the Gospels, but was handed down, like many other teachings of our Lord, by tradition.



## CHAPTER XXI

ST. PAUL'S JOURNEY FROM MILETUS TO JERUSALEM, 1-17.

ST. PAUL ENTERS THE ASSEMBLY OF THE ANCIENTS, 18-26.

THE JEWS STIR UP A TUMULT, AND ST. PAUL IS ARRESTED, 27-40.

1. And when it came to pass that, being parted from them, we set sail, we came with a straight course to Coos, and the day following to Rhodes, and from thence to Patara.

2. And when we had found a ship sailing over to Phenice, we went aboard, and set forth.

3. And when we had discovered Cyprus, leaving it on the left hand, we sailed into Syria, and came to Tyre: for there the ship was to unlade her burden.

4. And finding disciples, we tarried there seven days: who said to Paul through the Spirit, that he should not go up to Jerusalem.

5. And the days being expired, departing we went forward, they all bringing us on our way, with their wives and children, till we were out of the city: and we kneeled down on the shore, and we prayed.

6. And when we had bid one another farewell, we took ship; and they returned home.

7. But we having finished the voyage by sea, from Tyre came down to Ptolemais: and saluting the brethren, we abode one day with them.

1. **Coos**, or **Cos**, and **Rhodes** were islands of the Archipelago. The former was celebrated for its temple of *Æsculapius*, the god of medicine, and its famous school of medicine; and the latter for its *Colossus*, or gigantic statue of brass. **Patara** was a seaport town on the coast of *Lycia*.

2. **Phenice**, or "**Phoenecia**," was the narrow strip of land west of Palestine, of which Tyre was the capital.

4. In spite of the revelation of the Holy Ghost to the disciples, St. Paul went up to Jerusalem, because he knew it was the will of God that he should encounter the dangers there awaiting him.

7. **Ptolemais** was a part of *Phoenecia* south of Tyre.

8. And the next day departing, we came to Cæsarea. And entering into the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we abode with him.

9. And he had four daughters, virgins, who did prophesy.

10. And as we tarried there for some days, there came from Judea a certain prophet, named Agabus.

11. Who, when he was come to us, took Paul's girdle: and binding his own feet and hands, he said: Thus saith the Holy Ghost: The man whose girdle this is, the Jews shall bind in this manner in Jerusalem, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

12. Which when we had heard, both we and they that were of that place, desired him that he would not go up to Jerusalem.

13. Then Paul answered, and said: What do you mean weeping and afflicting my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but to die also in Jerusalem, for the name of the Lord Jesus.

14. And when we could not persuade him, we ceased, saying: The will of the Lord be done.

15. And after those days, being prepared, we went up to Jerusalem.

16. And there went also with us some of the disciples from Cæsarea, bringing with them one Mnason a Cyprian, an old disciple, with whom we should lodge.

17. And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

8. **Caesarea.** See on viii. 40. Philip was called "the evangelist" because of his eloquence in preaching the Gospel.

9. **Virgins.** This is generally understood to mean that Philip's daughters had embraced the state of virginity, and many Fathers believe God gave them the gift of prophecy as a reward of their virginity.

10. **Agabus,** probably the same person spoken of in xi. 28.

11. **And binding.** This symbolic way of expressing their meaning was characteristic of the Jewish prophets. Cf. 3 Kings xxii. 11; Isa. xx. 3; Jer. xiii. 5; Ezech. iv. 1-3, etc.

16. **With whom we should lodge.** According to the Vulgate it would seem that Mnason possessed a house in Jerusalem where he would give St. Paul lodging after their arrival there from Caesarea. Hence Mnason accompanied St. Paul and the disciples from Caesarea for this purpose. But the Greek of this passage reads as follows: "Leading us to a certain Mnason with whom we should lodge." According to this latter reading it would appear that Mnason had a house somewhere on the way to Jerusalem where the company might stay for the night, since the journey from Caesarea was too long to be covered in one day.

18. And the day following, Paul went in with us unto James; and all the ancients were assembled.

19. Whom when he had saluted, he related particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

20. But they hearing it, glorified God, and said to him: Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews that have believed: and they are all zealous for the law.

21. Now they have heard of thee that thou teachest those Jews, who are among the Gentiles, to depart from Moses: saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children, nor walk according to the custom.

22. What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

23. Do therefore this that we say to thee. We have four men, who have a vow on them.

24. Take these, and sanctify thyself with them: and bestow on them, that they may shave their heads: and all will know that the things which they have heard of thee are false; but that thou thyself also walkest keeping the law.

Evidently these disciples accompanied St. Paul to Jerusalem as an escort to protect him from the dangers they knew would threaten him there.

18. **James, the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem.**

21. **To depart from Moses.** This general accusation against St. Paul was false. He did indeed teach that the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic Law were not necessary, but he did not oblige the Jewish converts to give up the external practice of the Law. Even he himself submitted to these external observances on several occasions, and counseled the faithful to do likewise (Acts xvi. 3; xviii. 18; Rom. iii. 19).

22. **What is it therefore?** i.e., what is to be done in these circumstances to avert a riot among the Jews, and the dreadful consequences that must follow thereon?

23, 24. Immediately the ancients, i.e., the Bishops and priests, assembled, decided what Paul should do in order to show that he neither despised nor underrated the Law of Moses. **We have four men**, they said, Jewish converts who have the vow of the *Nazarites* (Num. vi. 1-24). Go and join yourself to these, taking the same vow and observing the same rites of purification and sanctification usual with such vows. Share with them the expenses for offerings and sacrifices which are connected with the completion of their vows, and thus everyone will know that what is said about you is **false**, and that you have respect for the Law. That the vow in

25. But as touching the Gentiles that believe, we have written, decreeing that they should only refrain themselves from that which has been offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication.

26. Then Paul took the men, and the next day being purified with them, entered into the temple, giving notice of the accomplishment of the days of purification, until an oblation should be offered for every one of them.

27. But when the seven days were drawing to an end, those Jews that were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands upon him, crying out:

28. Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover hath brought in Gentiles into the temple, and hath violated this holy place.

29. (For they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

question was that of the *Nazarites* seems certain from the fact that they were to shave their heads. See on xviii. 18.

25. St. James calls attention to the decree of the Council of Jerusalem which exempted the Gentiles from all the observances of the Law of Moses, but counseled that they refrain from those heathen practices which would be especially offensive to the Jewish converts. See on xv. 28, 29.

26. St. Paul at once complied with the advice of St. James and the ancients. He joined with the four men, and in the ceremonies of purification required for their vow. He entered into the Temple and announced to the priests (whose duty it was to offer the legal sacrifices and announce the completion of the vows) the time when their vows would be completed, and remained in the Temple until the sacrifices prescribed by the Law were offered for each one of them. Most probably St. Paul bore all the expenses connected with these offerings in the Temple at the making of their vows, because the four men were poor, and it was considered a meritorious act among the Jews to pay for poor Nazarites the expenses of their purification.

27. The seven days most likely refer to the time that had elapsed since St. Paul's arrival in Jerusalem. Some think they refer to the time that had elapsed after taking his vow. Others think the phrase means that seven days had passed since the announcement made to the priests (verse 26).

Of Asia. The same Jews had stirred up a persecution against St. Paul when he was in Ephesus. They were now at Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost.

28. Against the people of God, and the law of Moses, and the

30. And the whole city was in an uproar: and the people ran together. And taking Paul, they drew him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.

31. And as they went about to kill him, it was told the tribune of the band, That all Jerusalem was in confusion.

32. Who, forthwith taking with him soldiers and centurions, ran down to them. And when they saw the tribune and the soldiers they left off beating Paul.

33. Then the tribune coming near, took him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains: and demanded who he was, and what he had done.

34. And some cried one thing, some another, among the multitude. And when he could not know the certainty for the tumult, he commanded him to be carried into the castle.

35. And when he was come to the stairs, it fell out that he was carried by the soldiers, because of the violence of the people.

36. For the multitude of the people followed after, crying: Away with him.

37. And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith to the tribune: May I speak something to thee? Who said: Canst thou speak Greek?

38. Art not thou that Egyptian who before these days didst raise a tumult, and didst lead forth into the desert four thousand men that were murderers?

Temple. No Gentile was allowed to enter the middle court of the Temple, and any one found there was in danger of his life.

30. **They drew him out of the temple**, so as not to profane the sacred place with his blood; and the doors were shut by the attendant Levites to prevent the tumult from spreading into the Temple.

31. **The tribune** was Claudius Lysias, who represented the governor of Judea and resided in the Tower of Antonia overlooking the Temple. He had at his command about two hundred and sixty cavalrymen and about seven hundred and sixty infantrymen, which, during great festivals like Pentecost, were kept in readiness for immediate action in case of an uprising among the Jews.

33. **To be bound**, etc., as Agabus had foretold (verse 11).

34. **The castle**, or Tower of Antonia, situated at the northwestern angle of the Temple.

35. **The stairs** leading from the Temple to the Tower of Antonia, which was built on an eminence overlooking the Temple.

38. **That Egyptian**. He was very probably a Jew who resided in Egypt. Josephus (*Antiq.* xx. 3, 6; *Bell. Jud.* ii. 13, 5) says this man came from Egypt to Jerusalem, and being a magician pretended to be a prophet. He persuaded about thirty thousand Jews to

39. But Paul said to him: I am a Jew of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city. And I beseech thee, suffer me to speak to the people.

40. And when he had given him leave, Paul standing on the stairs, beckoned with his hand to the people. And a great silence being made, he spoke unto them in the Hebrew tongue, saying:

follow him to Mt. Olivet, where he promised that, at his word, the walls of Jerusalem should fall and the people should be liberated from the yoke of Rome. But Felix, the governor, learning of this, called out the Roman soldiers, and they slew four hundred, captured two hundred, and dispersed the rest of the thirty thousand. The Egyptian, however, escaped.

The four thousand mentioned by the tribune does not agree with the above account of Josephus; but Josephus is not always correct, or even consistent with himself. It is possible that Lysias was speaking of a different episode, or that he referred to the number that first began to follow the magician. These followers of the Egyptian were called "murderers," or assassins, from a short dagger (*sica*) which they carried. They belonged to a secret society, and hired themselves out to murder people.

39. **Tarsus** was the capital of Cilicia.

## CHAPTER XXII

ST. PAUL'S DISCOURSE TO THE JEWS IN DEFENSE OF  
HIMSELF, 1-21.

A NEW TUMULT ARISES, AND ST. PAUL DECLARES  
HE IS A ROMAN CITIZEN, 22-30.

1. Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye the account which I now give unto you.

2. (And when they heard that he spoke to them in the Hebrew tongue, they kept the more silence.)

3. And he saith: I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, taught according to the truth of the law of the fathers, zealous for the law, as also all you are this day:

1. St. Paul's discourse may be divided into three parts, each of which is a response to the different accusations made against him by the Jews. It was said that he was an enemy of Israel; and therefore in the first part of his discourse (verses 1-5) he shows that although born in Tarsus, he was a Jew, educated in Jerusalem, and that he became one of the most zealous of the Pharisees and a most terrible persecutor of the Christians. He was accused of being an enemy of the Law, and of having preached against it; and so in the second part (verses 6-16) he says that, if from a zealous Pharisee he became a Christian convert, it was because God Himself appeared to him on the way to Damascus and led him into the Church by the hand of Ananias, a man holy according to the Law. He was called an enemy of the Temple; and consequently in the third part (verses 17-21) he declares that it was in the very Temple of Jerusalem that he received from God the mission to convert the pagans (Sales).

3. **Gamaliel.** See on v. 34. **At the feet of** means, to be a disciple or student of. The teacher among the Jews occupied an elevated seat, and the pupils sat below on benches.

4. Who persecuted this way unto death, binding and delivering into prisons both men and women.

5. As the high priest doth bear me witness, and all the ancients: from whom also receiving letters to the brethren, I went to Damascus, that I might bring them bound from thence to Jerusalem to be punished.

6. And it came to pass, as I was going, and drawing nigh to Damascus at midday, that suddenly from heaven there shone round about me a great light:

7. And falling on the ground, I heard a voice saying to me: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?

8. And I answered: Who art thou, Lord? And he said to me: I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.

9. And they that were with me, saw indeed the light, but they heard not the voice of him that spoke with me.

10. And I said: What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said to me: Arise, and go to Damascus; and there it shall be told thee of all things that thou must do.

11. And whereas I did not see for the brightness of that light, being led by the hand by my companions, I came to Damascus.

12. And one Ananias, a man according to the law, having testimony of all the Jews who dwelt there,

13. Coming to me, and standing by me, said to me: Brother Saul, look up. And I the same hour looked upon him.

14. But he said: The God of our fathers hath preordained thee that thou shouldst know his will, and see the Just One, and shouldst hear the voice from his mouth.

15. For thou shalt be his witness to all men, of those things which thou hast seen and heard.

16. And now why tarriest thou? Rise up, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, invoking his name.

17. And it came to pass, when I was come again to Jerusalem, and was praying in the temple, that I was in a trance,

18. And saw him saying unto me: Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.

Instead of **zealous for the law**, the Greek has “**zealous toward God.**”

4. **This way**; i.e., those who professed the Christian religion.

5. **The high priest**. See on ix. 1.

6-13. See on ix. 3-17.

14. **Hath preordained thee**; i.e., hath chosen thee.

**The Just One**; i.e., Jesus Christ. See on iii. 14; vii. 52.

15. **Of those things which**, etc. St. Paul had seen Christ, had heard his voice, and had been instructed by Him in regard to the truths of the Gospel (Gal. i. 11 ff.).

17. **When I was come again to Jerusalem**, which was three years after his conversion (ix. 26; Gal. i. 18).



19. And I said: Lord, they know that I cast into prison, and beat in every synagogue, them that believed in thee.

20. And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I stood by and consented, and kept the garments of them that killed him.

21. And he said to me: Go, for unto the Gentiles afar off, will I send thee.

22. And they heard him until this word, and then lifted up their voice, saying: Away with such an one from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live.

23. And as they cried out and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air,

24. The tribune commanded him to be brought into the castle, and that he should be scourged and tortured: to know for what cause they did so cry out against him.

25. And when they had bound him with thongs, Paul saith to the centurion that stood by him: Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?

26. Which the centurion hearing, went to the tribune, and told him, saying: What art thou about to do? For this man is a Roman citizen.

27. And the tribune coming, said to him: Tell me, art thou a Roman? But he said: Yea.

**Praying in the temple.** This shows that St. Paul regarded the Temple as a holy place.

19, 20. St. Paul, by recalling that he thus reverently remonstrated with the Saviour, gives the reasons why the Jews ought not to be hostile to him. But when, in the following verse, he said he was ordered by God to go from the chosen people to the Gentiles, the Jews could no longer restrain themselves.

23. **Cast dust**, etc., to show their rage, and to signify that St. Paul ought to be suffocated.

24. Lysias the tribune had not understood St. Paul's Aramaic, and as a great uproar resulted from the Apostle's discourse, he thought he must be guilty of some crime; hence he ordered him brought into the Tower of Antonia, there "to be examined by the scourge," as it is expressed in the Greek. According to Roman practice the victim, before scourging, was stripped to the waist and bound with thongs or leather strips to a pillar.

25. **A Roman.** The Roman laws forbade the scourging of Roman citizens (Cicero, *In Verrem*, Act. ii. 66). At Philippi Paul did not assert his rights as a Roman, and suffered scourging for the name of Christ (xvi. 37), but here he was charged with a crime to the accusation of which he was unwilling to submit. He therefore appealed against this unlawful treatment to his Roman citizenship.

28. And the tribune answered: I obtained the being free of this city with a great sum. And Paul said: But I was born so.

29. Immediately therefore they departed from him that were about to torture him. The tribune also was afraid after he understood that he was a Roman citizen, and because he had bound him.

30. But on the next day, meaning to know more diligently for what cause he was accused by the Jews, he loosed him, and commanded the priests to come together, and all the council: and bringing forth Paul, he set him before them.

28. **I obtained the being free**, etc. The Emperors allowed the governors of provinces to grant the privileges of Roman citizens to individuals for a certain sum of money, and Lysias had purchased his own Roman citizenship at a great price; he could not understand how St. Paul was a Roman citizen. How the ancestors of Paul obtained their citizenship we do not know.

30. **The council**; i.e., the Sanhedrim.

## CHAPTER XXIII

ST. PAUL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIM, 1-10.

THE SAVIOUR APPEARS TO ST. PAUL, 11.

THE SICARII PLOT TO KILL ST. PAUL, 12-22.

ST. PAUL IS SENT TO CAESAREA UNDER MILITARY  
GUARD, 23-35.

1. And Paul looking upon the council, said: Men, brethren, I have conversed with all good conscience before God until this present day.

2. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to strike him on the mouth.

3. Then Paul said to him: God shall strike thee, thou whited wall. For sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and contrary to the law commandest me to be struck?

4. And they that stood by said: Dost thou revile the high priest of God?

5. And Paul said: I knew not, brethren, that he is the high priest. For it is written: Thou shalt not speak evil of the prince of thy people.

1. **I have conversed**, etc. Paul wishes to say that he has served God with sincerity up to the present time, both as a Jew, and afterwards as a Christian.

2. The High Priest was angered at Paul's protestation of innocence, and at the free and open manner in which he spoke. Ananias was High Priest A.D. 47-59. Cruel and corrupt in character he was deposed by the governor Felix, and was assassinated in A.D. 66 (Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* ii. 17, 9; *Antiq.* xx. 5, 2).

3. **Whited wall** was a Hebrew expression for a *hypocrite*. Cf. Matthew xxiii. 27. St. Paul's prophecy was fulfilled in the murder of Ananias by *sicarii* in A.D. 66.

**Contrary to the law.** The Law of Moses gave a man the right to defend himself.

5. **I knew not, brethren**, etc. What St. Paul meant by this is uncertain. Some say he was speaking ironically, because the High Priest, in breaking the law, had not acted like one who possessed such an office. Others say the High Priest was not there dressed in his distinctive attire; others, that St. Paul had been out of

6. And Paul knowing that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, cried out in the council: Men, brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees: concerning the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

7. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees; and the multitude was divided.

8. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.

9. And there arose a great cry. And some of the Pharisees rising up, strove, saying: We find no evil in this man. What if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?

10. And when there arose a great dissension, the tribune fearing lest Paul should be pulled in pieces by them, commanded the soldiers to go down, and to take him by force from among them, and to bring him into the castle.

11. And the night following the Lord standing by him, said: Be constant; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.

12. And when day was come, some of the Jews gathered together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying, that they would neither eat, nor drink, till they killed Paul.

13. And they were more than forty men that had made this conspiracy.

14. Who came to the chief priests and the ancients, and said: We have bound ourselves under a great curse that we will eat nothing till we have slain Paul.

15. Now therefore do you with the council signify to the tribune, that he bring him forth to you, as if you meant to know something more certain touching him. And we, before he come near, are ready to kill him.

Palestine a long time, and so had no certain knowledge as to who was the lawful High Priest.

6. Sadducees . . . Pharisees. See on iv. 1. St. Paul thought by this appeal to turn the discussion from himself to a much controverted question between the Pharisees and Sadducees, namely, the doctrine of the resurrection. It was not false for St. Paul to say that he was still a Pharisee, for he really was in regard to all the good doctrines of that sect, but not as regarded their evil and erroneous teachings.

9. Some of the Pharisees. In the Greek it is: "Some scribes of the sect of the Pharisees."

11. Our Lord appeared to Paul, whether in sleep or while awake we know not, and assured him that as he had defended the truth in Jerusalem, so he should also defend it in Rome. **Be constant** means "be of good cheer."

12. Under a curse; i.e., they called upon God to curse them, if they did not keep their promise.

16. Which when Paul's sister's son had heard, of their lying in wait, he came and entered into the castle and told Paul.

17. And Paul, calling to him one of the centurions, said: Bring this young man to the tribune, for he hath some thing to tell him.

18. And he taking him, brought him to the tribune, and said: Paul, the prisoner, desired me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath some thing to say to thee.

19. And the tribune taking him by the hand, went aside with him privately, and asked him: What is it that thou hast to tell me?

20. And he said: The Jews have agreed to desire thee, that thou wouldst bring forth Paul to morrow into the council, as if they meant to inquire some thing more certain touching him.

21. But do not thou give credit to them; for there lie in wait for him more than forty men of them, who have bound themselves by oath neither to eat, nor to drink, till they have killed him: and they are now ready, looking for a promise from thee.

22. The tribune therefore dismissed the young man, charging him that he should tell no man, that he had made known these things unto him.

23. Then having called two centurions, he said to them: Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea, and seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen for the third hour of the night:

24. And provide beasts, that they may set Paul on, and bring him safe to Felix the governor.

16. We know nothing further regarding this nephew of St. Paul's.

23. Lysias in providing such a large guard was looking to the safety of St. Paul, whom he wished to guard against any possible fury on the part of the Jews.

The Greek word *δεξιολάβους*, *spearsmen*, is not found in the classics; literally it means "those who take the right hand," i.e., those who hold spears or darts in their right hand.

**The third hour of the night; i.e., 9 P.M. in our time.**

24. **Felix the governor; i.e., Procurator of Judea.** In early life he had been a slave of Antonia, the mother of the Emperor Claudius (Josephus, *Antiq.* xviii. 6, 6). He became Procurator in A.D. 52-53. Tacitus (*Annales* xii. 54) says of Felix: "He wielded the power of a tyrant in the spirit of a slave." Secure in the protection of his brother Pallas, the all powerful favorite of Nero, he cruelly oppressed the Jews. He secured the assassination of the High Priest Jonathan and suppressed with great violence an uprising of the people led by a pseudo-Messiah from Egypt (cf. Acts xxi. 38; Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. 8. 6; *Bell. Jud.* II. B. 5). The cruelty of his government developed the bitterest feeling against Rome and hastened the great rebellion of A.D. 70. He was recalled in A.D. 60.

25. (For he feared lest perhaps the Jews might take him away by force and kill him, and he should afterwards be slandered, as if he was to take money.) And he wrote a letter after this manner:

26. Claudius Lysias to the most excellent governor, Felix, greeting.

27. This man being taken by the Jews, and ready to be killed by them, I rescued coming in with an army, understanding that he is a Roman:

28. And meaning to know the cause which they objected unto him, I brought him forth into their council.

29. Whom I found to be accused concerning questions of their law; but having nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bands.

30. And when I was told of ambushes that they had prepared for him, I sent him to thee, signifying also to his accusers to plead before thee. Farewell.

31. Then the soldiers, according as it was commanded them, taking Paul, brought him by night to Antipatris.

32. And the next day, leaving the horsemen to go with him, they returned to the castle.

33. Who, when they were come to Cæsarea, and had delivered the letter to the governor, did also present Paul before him.

34. And when he had read it, and had asked of what province he was, and understood that he was of Cilicia;

35. I will hear thee, said he, when thy accusers come. And he commanded him to be kept in Herod's judgment hall.

25. This verse is wanting in all but one of the Greek MSS., and in many copies of the Vulgate.

31. **Antipatris** was a small village, about forty-two miles from Jerusalem, named after Antipater, the father of Herod the Great. It was enlarged and much improved by Herod.

33. **Caesarea**, on the seacoast, was about thirty miles from Antipatris. It was the seat of the Roman governor of Palestine when St. Paul was imprisoned there.

34. **Cilicia** was an imperial Roman province, and therefore was subject to the jurisdiction of the Emperor.

35. Lysias had told Paul's accusers to go to Caesarea. **Herod's judgment hall** was the palace which Herod built at Caesarea, and which afterwards became the residence of the Roman Procurator of Judea. A part of the palace was reserved for prisoners.

## CHAPTER XXIV

ST. PAUL IS ACCUSED BEFORE FELIX, 1-9.

ST. PAUL DEFENDS HIMSELF, 10-21.

FELIX DELAYS DECISION, BEING MOVED BY PAUL'S  
DISCOURSE, 22-27.

1. And after five days the high priest Ananias came down, with some of the ancients, and one Tertullus an orator, who went to the governor against Paul.

2. And Paul being called for, Tertullus began to accuse him, saying: Whereas through thee we live in much peace, and many things are rectified by thy providence,

3. We accept it always and in all places, most excellent Felix, with all thanksgiving.

4. But that I be no further tedious to thee, I desire thee of thy clemency to hear us in few words.

5. We have found this to be a pestilent man, and raising seditions among all the Jews throughout the world, and author of the sedition of the sect of the Nazarenes.

1. **After five days**; i.e., most probably five days after Paul's arrival at Caesarea. A deputation of the Sanhedrim, headed by Ananias the High Priest, together with Tertullus, a Roman lawyer, to plead their case against St. Paul, appeared before Felix.

2, 3. Tertullus begins his address in a manner calculated to win the favor of Felix. He alludes to the many excellent things that had been done through his providence and care, and gratefully admits that all the blessings they enjoy are due to his paternal solicitude.

5. **A pestilent man**; i.e., a breeder of sedition. **And author**, i.e., ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes. **Nazarene** was a contemptuous term for a Christian. The accusations made by the lawyer against St. Paul were three: (a) That he was seditious, exciting disturbances in the Empire and among the Jews; (b) that he was one of the chief leaders among the Christians; (c) that he had tried to profane the Temple.

6. Who also hath gone about to profane the temple: whom, we having apprehended, would also have judged according to our law.

7. But Lysias the tribune coming upon us, with great violence took him away out of our hands;

8. Commanding his accusers to come to thee: of whom thou mayest thyself, by examination, have knowledge of all these things, whereof we accuse him.

9. And the Jews also added, and said that these things were so.

10. Then Paul answered, (the governor making a sign to him to speak:) Knowing that for many years thou hast been judge over this nation, I will with good courage answer for myself.

11. For thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days, since I went up to adore in Jerusalem:

12. And neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man, or causing any concourse of the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13. Neither can they prove unto thee the things whereof they now accuse me.

14. But this I confess to thee, that according to the way, which they call a heresy, so do I serve the Father and my God, believing all things which are written in the law and the prophets:

15. Having hope in God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection of the just and unjust.

16. And herein do I endeavour to have always a conscience without offence towards God, and towards men.

6. The false accusation uttered in this verse was refuted by St. Paul himself (verse 18). The second half of this verse, all of verse 7, and the first half of verse 8 are wanting in many of the best Greek MSS., and are omitted in the editions of Tischendorf and Westcott and Hort. This is doubtless an intercalation drawn from the preceding chapter to complete the address of the lawyer.

10. **Many years.** Felix became Procurator of Judea in A.D. 52-53, so he had held the office some seven years.

11-13. St. Paul flatly denies the charges made against him. He says only twelve days have passed since he went up to Jerusalem, and that his whole purpose in going there was a religious one, to adore God and perform acts of piety, and not to cause any tumult or be guilty of any irreligious act.

14. Here Paul refutes the accusation that he was an enemy of the Jews and the Jewish religion. Far from being such, he declares that he believes the same doctrine that they believe, but which in him "they call heresy."

16. On account of his faith in God and in the resurrection, St.



17. Now after many years, I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings, and vows.

18. In which I was found purified in the temple: neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19. But certain Jews of Asia, who ought to be present before thee, and to accuse, if they had any thing against me:

20. Or let these men themselves say, if they found in me any iniquity, when standing before the council,

21. Except it be for this one voice only that I cried, standing among them, Concerning the resurrection of the dead am I judged this day by you.

22. And Felix put them off, having most certain knowledge of this way, saying: When Lysias the tribune shall come down, I will hear you.

23. And he commanded a centurion to keep him, and that he should be easy, and that he should not prohibit any of his friends to minister unto him.

24. And after some days, Felix, coming with Drusilla his wife, who was a Jew, sent for Paul, and heard of him the faith, that is in Christ Jesus.

Paul declares that he is able to live a life in accord with his conscience.

17. St. Paul had not been in Jerusalem since the end of his second missionary journey (xviii. 22), and now he came with the alms he had collected for the poor in Jerusalem, and with the offering prescribed for his vow.

18. In which I was found, etc.; i.e., during which time I was performing in the Temple acts of religion and of veneration toward the Temple.

19. **Certain Jews of Asia.** These words ought to be joined with the preceding verse, as they are in the Greek; it was by these Jews that St. Paul was found in the Temple and calumniated. Their absence now at the trial showed their insincerity and dishonesty.

22. **Having most certain knowledge of this way;** i.e., of the teachings of Christianity. There were many Christians in Caesarea; and as Felix had been Procurator for some years he was well acquainted with the general practices and teachings of Christianity. He also knew that Paul was innocent, but out of fear of the Jews, or in hope of receiving a bribe, he held him (verse 26).

23. **His friends,** among whom were doubtless St. Luke, Trophimus, and Aristarchus.

24. **Felix . . . with Drusilla.** Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa I, and sister of Herod Agrippa II, and Bernice. She was first married to Azizus, King of Emesa, but left him to

25. And as he treated of justice, and chastity, and of the judgment to come, Felix being terrified, answered: For this time, go thy way: but when I have a convenient time, I will send for thee.

26. Hoping also withal, that money should be given him by Paul; for which cause also oftentimes sending for him, he spoke with him.

27. But when two years were ended, Felix had for successor Portius Festus. And Felix being willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, left Paul bound.

marry Felix. Her life with Felix was therefore adulterous (Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. 7). Being a Jewess, Drusilla wanted to hear something about the new religion preached by Paul, and so Felix called for the Apostle to hear more about the Christian religion.

25. **And as he treated of justice**, etc. Felix was terrified at Paul's exposition of these virtues, because he was guilty of the contrary vices. Perhaps he intended at some future time to discuss these same subjects with St. Paul.

27. Felix was called to Rome to answer certain charges made against him by Jews. Festus, his successor, had also been a slave, but was liberated, and became governor of Judea about A.D. 60. He held his office for two years, and before the end of this time was denounced by the Jews to the Emperor in Rome. Some say that Felix left St. Paul a prisoner under Festus on account of Drusilla, who, having been reproved by St. Paul for her adulterous life, hated the Apostle.

## CHAPTER XXV

BEING ACCUSED BEFORE FESTUS, ST. PAUL APPEALS  
TO CAESAR, 1-12.

ST. PAUL APPEARS BEFORE FESTUS AND AGRIPPA,  
13-27.

1. Now when Festus was come into the province, after three days, he went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea.

2. And the chief priests, and principal men of the Jews, went unto him against Paul: and they besought him,

3. Requesting favour against him, that he would command him to be brought to Jerusalem, laying wait to kill him in the way.

4. But Festus answered: That Paul was kept in Cæsarea, and that he himself would very shortly depart thither.

5. Let them, therefore, saith he, among you that are able, go down with me, and accuse him, if there be any crime in the man.

6. And having tarried among them no more than eight or ten days, he went down to Cæsarea, and the next day he sat in the judgment seat; and commanded Paul to be brought.

7. Who being brought, the Jews stood about him, who were come down from Jerusalem, objecting many and grievous causes, which they could not prove;

8. Paul making answer for himself: Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I offended in any thing.

1. **The province**; i.e., the Roman province of Judea.

2. **The chief priests**; i.e., the heads of the sacerdotal families. Some MSS. have: "The chief priest," but the plural reading is better supported.

3. **Requesting favor against him**; i.e., requesting a favor from Festus against St. Paul.

5. **That are able**; i.e., that have authority (*οἱ δυνατοί*). Festus wanted Paul accused by those who represented the nation, and not by the rabble.

6. **The next day**. The Jews evidently went down to Caesarea at the same time with Festus, and hence the case was called without delay.

9. But Festus, willing to shew the Jews a pleasure, answering Paul, said: Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?

10. Then Paul said: I stand at Cæsar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged. To the Jews I have done no injury, as thou very well knowest.

11. For if I have injured them, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die. But if there be none of these things whereof they accuse me, no man may deliver me to them: I appeal to Cæsar.

12. Then Festus having conferred with the council, answered: Hast thou appealed to Cæsar? To Cæsar shalt thou go.

13. And after some days, king Agrippa and Bernice came down to Cæsarea to salute Festus.

9. **Wilt thou go up**, etc. Festus knew that St. Paul, as a Roman citizen, had the right to be judged before a Roman tribunal; but in order to please the Jews he asked him if he was willing to go up to the Jewish judgment seat at Jerusalem.

10-12. St. Paul indignantly rejected the proposal of Festus and insisted on his rights as a Roman citizen. A Roman citizen could claim trial in Rome, and Festus and his council yielded to this demand on the part of St. Paul. Nero was then Emperor, but he, like the other successors of Julius Caesar, went by the illustrious title "Caesar."

13. **Agrippa and Bernice.** This was Agrippa the Younger, son of king Agrippa I. He was only seventeen years old when his father died in A.D. 44, and on account of his youth was not allowed to succeed his father as governor of Judea. In the year 53, however, he obtained from the Emperor Claudius the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias (Luke iii. 1), and later from Nero he gained control of some cities of Galilee and Peraea. After the destruction of Jerusalem he retired to private life in Rome and died there about the year 100.

At this present time Agrippa with Bernice came down to Caesarea to pay his respects to Festus, the new Procurator. Bernice was Agrippa's sister. She was first married to Herod her uncle, and after his death lived with her brother, with whom she was seriously suspected of incestuous relations (Josephus, *Antiq.* xx. 7, 3). She was afterwards married to Polemon, king of Cilicia, but soon abandoned him to live again with her brother in Rome. She had also scandalous relations with the Emperor Vespasian and with his son Titus (Tacit., *Hist.* ii. 81; Suet. *Titus* 7).

14. And as they tarried there many days, Festus told the king of Paul, saying: A certain man was left prisoner by Felix.

15. About whom, when I was at Jerusalem, the chief priests, and the ancients of the Jews, came unto me, desiring condemnation against him.

16. To whom I answered: It is not the custom of the Romans to condemn any man, before that he who is accused have his accusers present, and have liberty to make his answer, to clear himself of the things laid to his charge.

17. When therefore they were come hither, without any delay, on the day following, sitting in the judgment seat, I commanded the man to be brought.

18. Against whom, when the accusers stood up, they brought no accusation of things which I thought ill of:

19. But had certain questions of their own superstition against him, and of one Jesus deceased, whom Paul affirmed to be alive.

20. I therefore being in a doubt of this manner of question, asked him whether he would go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things.

21. But Paul appealing to be reserved unto the hearing of Augustus, I commanded him to be kept, till I might send him to Cæsar.

22. And Agrippa said to Festus: I would also hear the man, myself. To morrow, said he, thou shalt hear him.

23. And on the next day, when Agrippa and Bernice were come with great pomp, and had entered into the hall of audience, with the tribunes, and principal men of the city, at Festus' commandment, Paul was brought forth.

14. Festus did not know very much about Jewish customs, and so he related St. Paul's case to Agrippa, hoping for some light on the matter.

19. **Of their own superstition; i.e., of their own religion.** The word *δεισιδαιμονίας*, literally, *fear of demons*, here rendered *superstition*, was used by Festus in a good sense, for religion. The same term was used among the Romans and Greeks to designate their worship of their own gods.

**And of one Jesus.** From this it seems that St. Paul in his defense had spoken not only about the resurrection in general, but also about the Resurrection of our Lord.

21. **Augustus; i.e., Nero, the Emperor.** The name Augustus means *venerable, honorable*; it was common, like the title "Caesar," to all the Roman Emperors.

22. Being a Jew Agrippa was anxious to hear what Paul might have to say about Christ and Christianity.

23. **The hall of audience, or place of hearing, where the judges sat to hear cases of litigation.**

24. And Festus saith: King Agrippa, and all ye men who are here present with us, you see this man, about whom all the multitude of the Jews dealt with me at Jerusalem, requesting and crying out that he ought not to live any longer.

25. Yet have I found nothing that he hath committed worthy of death. But forasmuch as he himself hath appealed to Augustus, I have determined to send him.

26. Of whom I have nothing certain to write to my lord. For which cause I have brought him forth before you, and especially before thee, O king Agrippa, that examination being made, I may have what to write.

27. For it seemeth to me unreasonable to send a prisoner, and not to signify the things laid to his charge.

24-27. When a judge sent to Rome an accused who had appealed to the Emperor he was supposed to transmit at the same time an official report in writing of the accusations made against the accused, and the reason for his appeal to Rome. Not being much acquainted with the religion of the Jews, Festus knew not what to say against St. Paul, and hence he had the Apostle brought forth to see if Agrippa could find anything against him.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE DISCOURSE OF ST. PAUL BEFORE AGRIPPA, 1-23. AGRIPPA DECLARES ST. PAUL TO BE INNOCENT, 24-32.

1. Then Agrippa said to Paul: Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretching forth his hand, began to make his answer.

2. I think myself happy, O king Agrippa, that I am to answer for myself this day before thee, touching all the things whereof I am accused by the Jews.

3. Especially as thou knowest all, both customs and questions that are among the Jews: Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently.

4. And my life indeed from my youth, which was from the beginning among my own nation in Jerusalem, all the Jews do know:

5. Having known me from the beginning (if they will give testimony) that according to the most sure sect of our religion I lived a Pharisee.

6. And now for the hope of the promise that was made by God to the fathers, do I stand subject to judgment:

7. Unto which, our twelve tribes, serving night and day, hope to come. For which hope, O king, I am accused by the Jews.

1. Stretching forth his hand after the manner of orators St. Paul began his discourse before Agrippa. There are three parts to the discourse. In the first (verses 2-7), after an introduction, the Apostle gives an account of his life before his conversion. In the second part (verses 8-18) he shows how he came to embrace the faith of Christ, and how he began to preach that same faith to the Gentiles. In the third part (verses 19-23) he points out why the Jews wish to kill him, namely, because he has preached the faith of Christ to the Gentiles according to the command of God.

2, 3. St. Paul is happy to be able to explain to Agrippa, who understands the Jewish religion, the reason why the Jews have accused him.

5. **The most sure sect**; i.e., the most zealous, the most rigid sect.

6, 7. **The hope of the promise**, etc. St. Paul here states that the reason why the Jews hate him is because he hopes in the Messiah, in whom also the Jews hope, and for whose speedy coming they

8. Why should it be thought a thing incredible, that God should raise the dead?

9. And I indeed did formerly think, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

10. Which also I did at Jerusalem, and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority of the chief priests: and when they were put to death, I brought the sentence.

11. And oftentimes punishing them, in every synagogue, I compelled them to blaspheme: and being yet more mad against them, I persecuted them even unto foreign cities.

12. Whereupon when I was going to Damascus with authority and permission of the chief priest,

13. At midday, O king, I saw in the way a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them that were in company with me.

14. And when we were all fallen down on the ground, I heard a voice speaking to me in the Hebrew tongue: Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the goad.

15. And I said: Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord answered: I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.

cease not to offer sacrifices in the Temple and pray day and night. St. Paul has hoped in this same Messiah, but more than this, he believes and has preached that He has come, that He was put to death and has been raised by God from the dead.

8. St. Paul now asks Agrippa and his sceptical followers, or Sadducee friends, and perhaps also Festus, why they should doubt the Resurrection of the Messiah and the general resurrection of all the dead. The doctrine of the resurrection, as necessarily connected with eternal life and perfect happiness, was clearly a part of the promise in which the Jews hoped.

10. **I brought the sentence;** i.e., I gave full approval to their condemnation and death. St. Paul means to say that when sentence of death was pronounced against Christians he often acted as an agent of the judges by delivering the sentence to the executioners. Doubtless many others, besides St. Stephen, were put to death for their faith (ix. 1).

11. **Compelled them to blaspheme;** i.e., as far as he was able St. Paul forced the Christians not only to deny Christianity, but also to blaspheme the name of Jesus. **Unto foreign cities** refers to Damascus and other cities of Judea of which we have no record.

12-15. See on ix. 2-5.



16. But rise up, and stand upon thy feet: for to this end have I appeared to thee, that I may make thee a minister, and a witness of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things wherein I will appear to thee,

17. Delivering thee from the people, and from the nations, unto which now I send thee:

18. To open their eyes, that they may be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and a lot among the saints, by the faith that is in me.

19. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was not incredulous to the heavenly vision:

20. But to them first that are at Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and unto all the country of Judea, and to the Gentiles did I preach, that they should do penance, and turn to God, doing works worthy of penance.

21. For this cause the Jews, when I was in the temple, having apprehended me, went about to kill me.

22. But being aided by the help of God, I stand unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying no other thing than those which the prophets, and Moses did say should come to pass:

23. That Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light to the people, and to the Gentiles.

16. See on xxii. 15. This third narration of St. Paul's conversion is the shortest. Here he states very directly what had taken place, and the commission he had received from Christ Himself. None of the three narrations is complete in itself, and each has particulars proper to the end for which it was given.

Of those things wherein I will appear to thee. These words refer to new apparitions and revelations which Christ promised the Apostle. Cf. xviii. 9; xxiii. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 2.

17, 18. Delivering thee from the people; i.e., from the Jews, and from the nations, i.e., from the Gentiles, to whom he was commissioned to preach the Gospel truths so that their eyes might be opened, and they might be converted, etc. The faith that is in me; i.e., faith in Jesus Christ, which is necessary for forgiveness of sin and for sanctification.

19, 20. Considering the great revelation made to him and the mission given him by Christ, St. Paul was not able to be disobedient, but rather embraced the task of preaching the Gospel at Damascus, at Jerusalem, etc.

22, 23. St. Paul in these verses says that, notwithstanding persecution, he has continued by the help of God to bear witness and to preach to all the truths which were foretold in the Old Testament, and which have been verified in the New, namely, that Christ should

24. As he spoke these things, and made his answer, Festus said with a loud voice: Paul, thou art beside thyself: much learning doth make thee mad.

25. And Paul said: I am not mad, most excellent Festus, but I speak words of truth and soberness.

26. For the king knoweth of these things, to whom also I speak with confidence. For I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him. For neither was any of these things done in a corner.

27. Believest thou the prophets, O king Agrippa? I know that thou believest.

28. And Agrippa said to Paul: In a little thou persuadest me to become a Christian.

29. And Paul said: I would to God, that both in a little and in much, not only thou, but also all that hear me, this day, should become such as I also am, except these bands.

30. And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them.

31. And when they were gone aside, they spoke among themselves, saying: This man hath done nothing worthy of death or of bands.

32. And Agrippa said to Festus: This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed to Cæsar.

suffer, be put to death, rise again, etc. Cf. Isa. xlix. 4, 7; i. 6; lii. 13-53; liii; Zach. xii. 10; xiii. 7; Ps. xv. 10; xxi.

24, 25. Festus took little stock in the doctrine Paul believed and had been preaching, and hence he thought the Apostle was going mad. But St. Paul calmly replied that he was speaking only words of truth, foretold in Moses and the prophets and verified in his own time.

26. St. Paul here tells Festus that King Agrippa is well acquainted with all the doctrines relative to Christ, the Messiah, who for three years had preached and worked wonders throughout all Palestine, and to whom the Apostles had borne witness by their preaching and miracles.

27, 28. Agrippa, being a Jew, must have been conversant with the prophets, and must have seen that the things foretold of the Messiah were fulfilled in Jesus. Agrippa's response, however, is differently interpreted. According to some his reply meant: With little, i.e., with few arguments, you do not persuade me to become a Christian. According to others he wished to say: Are you persuaded that I wish to become a Christian in so short a time? Still others think the king was greatly influenced by St. Paul's arguments and meant to say: You almost persuade me to become a Christian.

29. Such as I also am; i.e., Christian. Paul wished not only for the conversion of Agrippa, but of Festus and all the rest.

## CHAPTER XXVII

PAUL LEAVES CAESAREA AND SAILS FOR ROME, 1-3.  
THE VOYAGE FROM SIDON TO LYSTRA AND GOOD-  
HAVENS, 4-13.

THE SHIP IS CAUGHT IN A TEMPEST WHICH LASTS  
FOR FOURTEEN DAYS, 14-26.

THE SHIP RUNS AGROUND ON THE COAST OF MALTA,  
27-44.

1. And when it was determined that he should sail into Italy, and that Paul, with the other prisoners, should be delivered to a centurion, named Julius, of the band Augusta,

2. Going on board a ship of Adrumetum, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia, Aristarchus, the Macedonian of Thessalonica, continuing with us.

1. **That he should sail**, etc. The Greek has, "that we should sail," which shows that St. Luke was to accompany St. Paul, together with the other prisoners who had also appealed to Caesar. **The band Augusta** was a cohort, or body of cavalrymen, formed by the Emperor Augustus and called after him. This band or cohort traveled from Rome to all parts of the Empire, regulating food and other necessities of life, and doing police duty. The Greek has, "band of Sebaste," hence some exegetes say that the soldiers who composed it were from a city in Samaria called *Sebaste*, or *Augusta*, by Herod in honor of the Roman Emperor.

2. **Adrumetum** was a city in Africa on the coast of Libya. In the Greek we have *Adramyttium*, a town on the coast of Mysia, instead of Adrumetum.

**We launched.** The unfailing accuracy of St. Luke's knowledge in all matters, whether historical, geographical, political, social, or otherwise, is being more and more admitted by all scholars, aside altogether from a consideration of inspiration. And this accuracy, in general and in detail, can hardly be better illustrated, we are told, than by the account of St. Paul's voyage from Caesarea to

3. And the day following we came to Sidon. And Julius treating Paul courteously, permitted him to go to his friends, and to take care of himself.

4. And when we had launched from thence, we sailed under Cyprus, because the winds were contrary.

5. And sailing over the sea of Cilicia, and Pamphylia, we came to Lystra, which is in Lycia :

Rome and the shipwreck on the island of Malta. On this subject Breusing, the former director of the naval academy in Bremen, says: "The most valuable nautical document preserved to us from antiquity is the description of the sea journey and shipwreck of the Apostle Paul. Every seaman recognizes at once that it must have been written by an eyewitness." (*Die Nautik der Alten*, S. xiii). Likewise Philip Schaff (*History of the Christian Church*, vol. 1, pp. 736, 737), tells us that St. Luke "betrays the minute accuracy of an intelligent eyewitness, who, though not a professional seaman, was very familiar with nautical terms from close observation. He uses no less than sixteen technical terms, some of them rare, to describe the motion and management of the ship, and all of them most appropriately; and he is strictly correct in the description of the localities at Crete, Salmone, Fair Havens, Canda, Lasea and Phoenix (two small places recently identified), and Melita (Malta), as well as the motions and effects of the tempestuous northeast wind called Euroquilo in the Mediterranean."

3. **Sidon**, the principal city of Phœnicia. Julius the centurion was very kind to St. Paul, and allowed him to go freely about in Sidon to visit his friends and receive their hospitality.

4. **The winds were contrary**. At this season of the year, around the end of August, the winds in the Levant blow very fiercely from the west and northwest. As St. Paul's ship was bound for the northwest, it could make its course only by taking a northerly direction and keeping close to the eastern shores of Cyprus. Hence it is said they **sailed under Cyprus**; i.e., under the protection of Cyprus, which shielded the ship against the violence of a contrary wind.

5. **The sea of Cilicia**, etc., means the waters washing the coasts of these countries. **Lystra** is a mistake, perhaps of a copyist, for *Myra*, the city afterwards renowned as the see of St. Nicholas. **Lycia** was a small province of southwestern Asia Minor.

6. And there the centurion finding a ship of Alexandria sailing into Italy, removed us into it.

7. And when for many days we had sailed slowly, and were scarce come over against Gnidus, the wind not suffering us, we sailed near Crete by Salmone:

8. And with much ado sailing by it, we came into a certain place, which is called Good-havens, nigh to which was the city of Thalassa.

9. And when much time was spent, and when sailing now was dangerous, because the fast was now past, Paul comforted them,

10. Saying to them: Ye men, I see that the voyage beginneth to be with injury and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.

11. But the centurion believed the pilot and the master of the ship, more than those things which were said by Paul.

6. **A ship of Alexandria**, probably one of the ships of the imperial navy for carrying corn and wheat from Egypt to Italy. She must have been a large vessel to be able to accommodate two hundred and seventy-six passengers (verse 37) besides her cargo. She was most likely driven into the port of Lycia by the contrary winds.

7. From Myra to Gnidus, or Cnidus, was only a day's journey, but the wind being unfavorable, the vessel made slow progress in a southwesterly direction, until it got the shelter of the island of Crete. **Gnidus** was a town situated on a promontory of the same name between the islands of Cos and Rhodes. **Salmone**, or Cape Salmon, was a promontory on the eastern coast of Crete.

8. **Goodhavens**, or Fair Havens, was in the southern part of Crete, where the ship could get some protection against the north-western gales. **Thalassa**, or Lasea, as it is in Greek, was a city about five miles east of Good Havens.

9. **The fast**. It is the common opinion that the fast here spoken of was that observed for the Day of Atonement (Lev. xvi. 29; xxiii. 27), which occurred around the end of September. After this, from October to March, sailing on the Mediterranean was extremely difficult on account of the long dark nights, frequent storms, and violent winds. Most likely St. Paul had hoped to be in Italy before the stormy season began, but the ship had been greatly delayed from the outset by contrary winds.

10. St. Paul had had much experience with the sea and its perils, and from his experience, as well as from a heavenly premonition, he knew there was danger ahead, both to the ship and its cargo and to the passengers.

12. And whereas it was not a commodious haven to winter in, the greatest part gave counsel to sail thence, if by any means they might reach Phenice to winter there, which is a haven of Crete, looking towards the southwest and northwest.

13. And the south wind gently blowing, thinking that they had obtained their purpose, when they had loosed from Asson, they sailed close by Crete.

14. But not long after, there arose against it a tempestuous wind, called Euroaquilo.

15. And when the ship was caught, and could not bear up against the wind, giving up the ship to the winds, we were driven.

16. And running under a certain island, that is called Cauda, we had much work to come by the boat.

12. There was now no hope of reaching Italy before the stormy season, but as a matter of fact the bay of Good Havens was not a good one to winter in; it was open to the east or southeast and so would not be a secure protection for the ship against storms sweeping from the west and northwest. Phenice, the modern *Lutro*, was only a day's sail from Good Havens, but as this must be done in the face of a strong northwest gale, it was very difficult and dangerous. The harbor, however, of Phenice was entered from the southwest and was protected by high land on the northwest. Once in this harbor, therefore, the ship would be secure for the winter.

13. Their purpose was to sail quietly along the coast of Crete, and this the gentle south wind favored. Asson is generally regarded as a mistake for the Greek adverb *ἄσσον*, which means *nearer, close by*. There was no such town as Asson on the coast of Crete.

14. Euroaquilo (*εὐρακίλων*), which is the reading of the Vulgate and of the best Greek MSS., means a northeast wind. This wind suddenly swept down from Mt. Ida and drove the ship far out from the coast.

16. Running under, or in the protection of, the small island of Cauda (modern Gozo), which was about twenty-five miles southwest of Crete. This island protected the ship from the gale and enabled it to sail for some distance in calm waters. To come by the boat means to get up on the deck of the ship the small boat that was trailing at the ship's stern; the storm had been so violent that there was no chance to do this before. This small boat was used to enable the passengers to land or embark in shallow waters.

17. Which being taken up, they used helps, undergirding the ship, and fearing lest they should fall into the quicksands, they let down the sail yard, and so were driven.

18. And we being mightily tossed with the tempest, the next day they lightened the ship.

19. And the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship.

20. And when neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small storm lay on us, all hope of our being saved was now taken away.

21. And after they had fasted a long time, Paul standing forth in the midst of them, said: You should indeed, O ye men, have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and have gained this harm and loss.

22. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer. For there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but only of the ship.

23. For an angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, stood by me this night,

24. Saying: Fear not, Paul, thou must be brought before Cæsar; and behold, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee.

25. Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer; for I believe God that it shall so be, as it hath been told me.

26. And we must come unto a certain island.

17. **Helps** were strong ropes and cables tied round the hull of the ship to keep her planks and timbers from breaking apart under the pressure of the storm. **Undergirding**; i.e., strengthening the ship by means of the ropes and cables.

**Quicksands**, off the coast of Africa, toward which the northeast gale was driving the ship. **Sail yard**; i.e., the sails and the masts, or fittings that supported them, were let down, so as to retard the course of the ship as much as possible. See above, on verse 2.

18. **They lightened**; i.e., they threw overboard a part of their cargo, or at least things that were unnecessary, in order to lighten the ship.

19. **The tackling**; i.e., the ropes, cables, etc. See above, on verse 2.

20. Compasses were unknown in those days, and seamen had to be guided by the heavenly bodies.

21. The passengers and crew **fasted**, inasmuch as the fear of impending death took away all desire for food. Had they listened to St. Paul they would not have encountered this danger and suffering.

22-25. By divine revelation made known to him through an angel St. Paul assured the passengers and crew of the vessel that no

27. But after the fourteenth night was come, as we were sailing in *Adria*, about midnight, the shipmen deemed that they discovered some country.

28. Who also sounding, found twenty fathoms; and going on a little further, they found fifteen fathoms.

29. Then fearing lest we should fall upon rough places, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.

30. But as the shipmen sought to fly out of the ship, having let down the boat into the sea, under colour, as though they would have cast anchors out of the forepart of the ship,

31. Paul said to the centurion, and to the soldiers: Except these stay in the ship, you cannot be saved.

32. Then the soldiers cut off the ropes of the boat, and let her fall off.

33. And when it began to be light, Paul besought them all to take *meat*, saying: This day is the fourteenth day that you have waited, and continued fasting, taking nothing.

34. Wherefore I pray you to take some meat for your health's sake; for there shall not an hair of the head of any of you perish.

35. And when he had said these things, taking bread, he gave thanks to God in the sight of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat.

36. Then were they all of better cheer, and they also took some meat.

37. And we were in all in the ship, two hundred threescore and sixteen souls.

38. And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, casting the wheat into the sea.

harm should befall them. The angel assured St. Paul that he must carry out the prediction God had made to him about giving testimony in Rome (xxiii. 11).

27. **The fourteenth night** after leaving Good Havens. *Adria* was the name given not only to what is now the Adriatic Sea, but to all the water lying between Greece, Italy, and Africa. **The shipmen deemed**, etc., perhaps because they heard the waters breaking on the shore; it was night and they could not see well.

30. **Sought to fly**; i.e., they were about to escape from the ship, which they thought would be destroyed by the waves before morning. **Under colour**; i.e., under pretense of anchoring the ship, but in reality in order to escape.

31. **Except these stay**, etc.; i.e., the seamen, who alone knew how to take care of the ship, must not be permitted to leave her.

33. **Taking nothing**. This was evidently not meant to be taken too literally.

35. **He gave thanks**, etc., as was customary with the Jews before eating, and as our Lord did before multiplying the loaves (Matt. xv. 36; Mark viii. 6; John vi. 11).



39. And when it was day, they knew not the land; but they discovered a certain creek that had a shore, into which they minded, if they could, to thrust in the ship.

40. And when they had taken up the anchors, they committed themselves to the sea, loosing withal the rudder bands; and hoisting up the mainsail to the wind, they made towards shore.

41. And when we were fallen into a place where two seas met, they run the ship aground; and the forepart indeed, sticking fast, remained unmoveable: but the hinder part was broken with the violence of the sea.

42. And the soldiers' counsel was, that they should kill the prisoners, lest any of them, swimming out, should escape.

43. But the centurion, willing to save Paul, forbade it to be done; and he commanded that they who could swim, should cast themselves first into the sea, and save themselves, and get to land.

44. And the rest, some they carried on boards, and some on those things that belonged to the ship. And so it came to pass, that every soul got safe to land.

**39. They knew not the land;** i.e., the land before them was unknown and strange to them. It was, in fact, the island of Malta, with the harbor of which the sailors from Alexandria must have been familiar, but the port they now saw was an unfrequented portion of the island. **A certain creek** was in reality a narrow channel running between the main land and the small island of Salmoneta.

**40. Had taken up the anchors.** The Greek means they cut the ropes and left the anchors in the sea, so as to lighten the ship and thus enable it more easily to reach the land. **The bands** were the ropes which fastened the rudder to the side of the ship. Ancient vessels carried a rudder on each side of the ship at the stern to be used in steering the ship. These rudders were taken up during the storm and fastened on deck, but the storm being over, they were loosened and again let into the water to help guide the ship. **The mainsail** was probably at the stern of the vessel, and used to direct its course; some, however, think it was at the prow.

**41. A place where two seas met;** i.e., a sand bank which was formed by the action of two opposite currents, on which the ship accidentally ran aground.

**The hinder part was broken,**—rather, “was being broken” (*ἐλθερο*). This was St. Paul's fourth shipwreck (2 Cor. xi. 25); it occurred in what tradition has called St. Paul's Bay, on the northeast coast of the island of Malta.

## CHAPTER XXVIII

ST. PAUL REMAINS THREE MONTHS IN MALTA,  
RECEIVES THE HOSPITALITY OF THE MALTESE, AND  
WORKS MANY CURES, 1-10.

ST. PAUL SAILS FOR ROME, 11-15.

ARRIVED IN ROME, ST. PAUL ADDRESSES THE JEWS  
THERE, AND PREACHES FREELY IN THE CITY, 16-31.

1. And when we had escaped, then we knew that the island was called Melita. But the barbarians shewed us no small courtesy.

2. For kindling a fire, they refreshed us all, because of the present rain, and of the cold.

3. And when Paul had gathered together a bundle of sticks, and had laid them on the fire, a viper coming out of the heat, fastened on his hand.

4. And when the barbarians saw the beast hanging on his hand, they said one to another: Undoubtedly this man is a murderer, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance doth not suffer him to live.

5. And he indeed shaking off the beast into the fire, suffered no harm.

6. But they supposed that he would begin to swell up, and that he would suddenly fall down and die. But expecting long, and seeing that there came no harm to him, changing their minds, they said, that he was a god.

7. Now in these places were possessions of the chief man of the island, named Publius, who receiving us, for three days entertained us courteously.

1. Escaped; i.e., landed safely on the beach. Malita; i.e., the island of Malta, south of Sicily. Some modern writers have said that Malita was the island of Meleda in the Venetian Gulf; but this opinion is against all tradition, and is irreconcilable with the description given in the Acts of the rest of the voyage to Rome.

Barbarians, among the ancients, were simply those who were neither Greeks nor Romans. The Maltese are descended from the Phoenicians, and they still speak a Phoenician dialect.

3. A viper. There are now no vipers in Malta, but this is due to the thick population of the island and to the consequent frequent and general cultivation of the soil, which make the existence of venomous reptiles impossible. That St. Paul was actually stung by the reptile and miraculously cured seems evident from the reasoning of the Maltese (verses 4, 6).

7. The chief man of the island (*τῷ πρώτῳ τῆς νήσου*). That the

8. And it happened that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux. To whom Paul entered in; and when he had prayed, and laid his hands on him, he healed him.

9. Which being done, all that had diseases in the island, came and were healed:

10. Who also honoured us with many honours, and when we were to set sail, they laded us with such things as were necessary.

11. And after three months, we sailed in a ship of Alexandria, that had wintered in the island, whose sign was the Castors.

12. And when we were come to Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

13. From thence, compassing by the shore, we came to Rhegium: and after one day, the south wind blowing, we came the second day to Puteoli;

14. Where, finding brethren, we were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went to Rome.

title of *πρωτος* was the one given to the governor of the island we are informed by two inscriptions, one in Greek and one in Latin, discovered in the years 1647 and 1747. Malta was subject to the Praetor of Sicily, and Publius was therefore the supreme governor of the island as the deputy of the Praetor of Sicily. Tradition tells us that Publius became the first Bishop of Malta.

8. **Bloody flux**, — literally, *dysentery*.

10. The Maltese, out of gratitude for the cures they had received from St. Paul, honored him and his companions with many gifts and things necessary for the rest of their journey.

11. **After three months**, etc. This was probably about the end of February, when it was again safe to put out to sea.

**The castors**, the Dioscuri in Greek, who were the twin brothers Castor and Pollux, sons of Jove and Leda. Castor and Pollux came to be the tutelar divinities of seamen. The ship, therefore, on which St. Paul and his company sailed from Malta carried on its prow the images of these two divinities.

13. **Compassing**, etc.; i.e., coasting round the eastern shore of Sicily. **Rhegium** is in the southern extremity of Italy, opposite Messina in Sicily. **Puteoli**, the modern Pozzuoli at the head of the Bay of Naples, was about one hundred and eighty miles from Rhegium; the covering of so great a distance in a little more than twenty-four hours was made possible by the favorable wind.

14. **Finding brethren**. There were already many Christians in Pozzuoli.

15. And from thence, when the brethren had heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii Forum, and the Three Taverns: whom when Paul saw, he gave thanks to God, and took courage.

16. And when we were come to Rome, Paul was suffered to dwell by himself, with a soldier that kept him.

17. And after the third day, he called together the chief of the Jews. And when they were assembled, he said to them: Men, brethren, I, having done nothing against the people, or the custom of our fathers, was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans;

18. Who, when they had examined me, would have released me, for that there was no cause of death in me;

19. But the Jews contradicting it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had any thing to accuse my nation of.

20. For this cause therefore I desired to see you, and to speak to you. Because that for the hope of Israel, I am bound with this chain.

15. **From thence**; i.e., from Pozzuoli, whence the Christians at Rome had learned of St. Paul's coming to the Capital; they had for a long time known much about the preaching, labors, and sufferings of St. Paul, and they had been assured in a letter from him of his desire and intention of visiting them. **Appii Forum** was a village on the Appian way about forty-five miles from Rome. This village, as well as the Appian way, was built by Appius Claudius, hence the name. **Three Taverns** was another town on the Appian way about ten miles nearer Rome. These extraordinary signs of affection for St. Paul on the part of the faithful at Rome were a great comfort to the Apostle.

16. Many Greek MSS. after **Rome** in this verse add: "The centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard."

The good report given of St. Paul by the centurion Julius, as well as through the letter sent by Festus (xxv. 26; xxvi. 31), made the Apostle's imprisonment very easy. He was permitted to go about and visit the faithful, preach and establish new communities of Christians and the like (verses 30, 31); but when out of **his own hired lodging** he was always accompanied by a prætorian soldier to whom he was bound by a chain (verse 20). According to Roman custom the chain was attached to the right arm of the prisoner and the left of the soldier.

17-20. Three days after his arrival in Rome, when he had become rested, St. Paul called together the principal persons among the Jews in the city for the purpose of explaining to them why he had come there a prisoner. He thought that the Jews of Palestine, his

21. But they said to him: We neither received letters concerning thee from Judea, neither did any of the brethren that came hither, relate or speak any evil of thee.

22. But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest; for as concerning this sect, we know that it is every where contradicted.

23. And when they had appointed him a day, there came very many to him unto his lodgings; to whom he expounded, testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, out of the law of Moses and the prophets, from morning until evening.

24. And some believed the things that were said; but some believed not.

25. And when they agreed not among themselves, they departed, Paul speaking this one word: Well did the Holy Ghost speak to our fathers by Isaias the prophet,

26. Saying: Go to this people, and say to them: With the ear you shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing you shall see, and shall not perceive.

27. For the heart of this people is grown gross, and with their ears have they heard heavily, and their eyes they have shut; lest perhaps they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

enemies, had sent to Rome ahead of him a bad report of his life and doings. For the sake of the Gospel, therefore, he deemed it necessary to make it known at once that he had committed no crime or fault against the Jewish people or their religious customs, that he had been tried by the Roman authorities and declared innocent, and that, being still opposed by the Jews, he was obliged to appeal to Caesar. And the sole cause of these his sufferings at the hands of the Jews, he says, was because he preached that Jesus was the Messiah, the hope of Israel (verse 20), and that He was risen from the dead (see on xxvi. 6).

21. This verse shows that St. Paul's enemies were the Jews of Palestine and Asia; no one in Rome had anything against him.

22. **This sect;** i.e., the Christian religion. **Contradicted;** i.e., reviled, calumniated. The great majority of Christians at Rome were converts from paganism, and hence these chief Jews did not know much about the new religion.

23. **He expounded, testifying, etc.;** i.e., he explained to them the Law of Moses and the Prophets which foretold and described the Messiah, and he further showed them how all the prophecies had been fulfilled in Jesus.

25-27. See on Matthew xiii. 13-15; Mark iv. 12; John xii. 40. The citation here from Isaias is almost literally from the Septuagint.

28. Be it known therefore to you, that this salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it.

29. And when he had said these things, the Jews went out from him, having much reasoning among themselves.

30. And he remained two whole years in his own hired lodging; and he received all that came in to him,

31. Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, without prohibition.

28. This salvation; i.e., the means of salvation brought to the world by Christ. Being repudiated by the Jews, it was given to the Gentiles.

29. This verse is wanting in the most ancient MSS. and in some versions.

30, 31. It is not known why St. Paul was detained so long as a prisoner in Rome. Perhaps his case had to wait its turn, being preceded by many others, or perhaps the authorities were long waiting for the witnesses and accusers to arrive from far and scattered regions. The Apostle, however, during these two years enjoyed great liberty to go about and preach the Gospel. It was during this time also that he wrote his Epistles to the churches of Asia Minor and Philippi.

St. Luke's account ends here, and for the remainder of St. Paul's history—his subsequent trials, labors, and preaching—we have to rely on tradition and on the Apostle's later Epistles. That he was finally liberated from prison we might easily conjecture from the attitude toward him of Festus and Julius; but of this we are made still more certain by the Epistles to the Philippians (i. 25-27; ii. 24) and to Philemon (22), as well as by the Pastoral Epistles, which latter were surely written after his release from his first Roman imprisonment.

With regard to St. Luke's termination of the book of Acts, it is generally considered as rather abrupt. For this abruptness various reasons have been assigned. Perhaps just at the end of the two years' captivity St. Luke was suddenly carried out into other fields of activity of which we have no recorded account, and thus lost the thread of his narrative, or was somehow impeded from developing it further. But it also seems reasonable to suppose that, since the Acts were mainly destined for the Christian converts at Rome, St. Luke thought it unnecessary to dwell at any great length

on what happened to St. Paul in the Eternal City. Hence after their arrival there he is content with mentioning how the Apostle was permitted to live, his meetings and conferences with the Jews of Rome, and his generous services of teaching and instructing all who came to him. He tells us definitely the length of the Apostle's imprisonment, without considering it of need to note a fact so well known to his Roman readers as would be the Saint's release. The historian considers the purpose attained for which he wrote his book, and so adds no further word about St. Paul's later activities or even his departure from Rome.

St. Luke might have had another reason for recording nothing more about St. Paul after the latter's liberation, namely, to deprive the Apostle's enemies of knowledge which they might be able to turn to his detriment through continued or even greater persecutions. As before, when Peter (xii. 17) had been liberated from prison and escaped from his enemies, St. Luke was satisfied simply to note the event, without giving further information regarding his labors or whereabouts, which his persecutors might use against him, so likewise perhaps, in the case of Paul, he judged better, for the Apostle's safety and welfare, to treat of nothing subsequent to his term of imprisonment, or even to call attention to the fact of his actual liberation.

But whatever may be the explanation of the abrupt ending of the book of Acts we are not at liberty to regard this abruptness as an argument in favor of the opinions which say that Luke wrote another work which has been lost, or that he intended to write a sequel to this present volume and that, consequently, the composition of the book of Acts must be placed long after the end of St. Paul's first Roman captivity. See *Decisions of the Biblical Comm.*, No. IV, page 198. Nor should we regard this seemingly sudden termination of the Acts, and the consequent omission of events and details which we might reasonably expect and look for, as something altogether singular and peculiar to St. Luke in this particular part of his work.

As a matter of fact there are many remarkable omissions in the Acts which are quite as strange to us, and as difficult to account for, as is the author's failure to tell us of Paul's release and of his subsequent activities. Consider, for example: (a) St. Luke's

silence regarding the Pauline Epistles. The most of these Epistles were written before the completion of the Acts, and St. Paul was writing several of them most probably at the very time when St. Luke was composing his book; and yet we find no mention of the Epistles in the Acts. He who wrote so much about St. Paul—about his journeys, his preaching, and the numerous churches he founded—never speaks of the great Apostle's swift and fertile pen. (b) When we turn to the Epistles of St. Paul we find that St. Luke has given us only the barest outline of the Apostle's manifold and marvellous adventures. St. Paul was shipwrecked at least four times; St. Luke records only the last. The Apostle was seven times in prison; St. Luke speaks of only two imprisonments. Paul was scourged on five different occasions; Luke makes no mention of any scourging. The Apostle tells the Corinthians of many kinds of hardships he endured for the sake of the Gospel,—perils from waters, from the Gentiles, from robbers; perils in the wilderness and in the depth of the sea for a day and a night; perils from hunger, thirst, nakedness, etc.—about all of which Luke has failed to give us a word. (c) St. Luke speaks often about St. Paul's missionary companions, but is ever silent about the devoted and serviceable Titus. (d) St. Peter's escape from prison is recorded in Acts xii. 17 ff., but where he went or what he did during the remaining twenty-five years of his life we know only from tradition. St. Luke was surely aware of the residence and labors of the head of the Church during all those many years, but he has told us nothing on the subject. And what were the missionary labors and successes of the other Apostles? St. Luke does not tell us, although their lives and works must have been well known to him. (e) The Blessed Virgin is mentioned only once, in the first chapter of the Acts. Where she went after the day of Pentecost, what part she had in the spread of the Gospel, where she lived and died, St. Luke certainly knew, but he has not told us.

With all these notable omissions in the Acts before us, the apparent brusqueness of the book's ending and its failure to give us an account of subsequent happenings in regard to St. Paul must, indeed, cease to seem so strange. St. Luke never intended to give us in the Acts a complete Church history, nor to write a detailed biography of any of the Apostles. The author selected from the



mass of material at his disposal the incidents which best fitted his plan. His one great purpose in writing the Acts was to show the spread of the Gospel and the consequent fulfillment of those parting words of the Saviour before the Ascension: "You shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the uttermost parts of the earth" (Acts i. 8); and this he has done. Necessarily his account is somewhat fragmentary in character, but of the book as a whole Harnack (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 298) has well said: "Judged from almost every possible standpoint of historical criticism it is a solid, respectable, and in many respects an extraordinary work."



# CHRONOLOGY OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

A.D.

- 30 . . . . Ascension and Pentecost (Acts i-ii).
- 30-33 . . The Spread of the Gospel at Jerusalem (Acts iii-vi).
- 33 . . . . The Martyrdom of St. Stephen (Acts vii).
- 34 . . . . The Persecution of the Church at Jerusalem and the  
Mission to Samaria (Acts viii).
- 34-35 . . The Conversion of St. Paul (Acts ix. 1-21).
- 35-37 . . St. Paul Spends Three Years at Damascus and in  
Arabia (Gal. i. 15).
- 36 . . . . *Deposition of Pilate; Marcellus, Procurator.*
- 36 . . . . *Caiphas Deposed from the Office of High-priest.*
- 37 . . . . *Death of Tiberius; Caligula, Emperor.*
- 37 . . . . *Marullus, Procurator.*
- 37 . . . . St. Paul Returns from Arabia to Damascus, then  
makes his First Journey to Jerusalem (Acts ix.  
22-28).
- 37-41 . . St. Peter Visits the Churches. Spread of the Gospel  
to Antioch (Acts ix. 29-xi. 21).
- 39 . . . . *Caligula Orders his Statue put in the Temple in  
Jerusalem.*
- 41 . . . . *Claudius, Emperor. Herod Agrippa I, King of Judea  
and Samaria.*
- 42-43 . . Paul and Barnabas at Antioch (Acts ix. 22-26).
- 42 . . . . Martyrdom of St. James and Imprisonment of St.  
Peter (Acts xii. 1-24).
- 43 . . . . St. Paul's Second Journey to Jerusalem (Acts xi. 27-  
30-xii. 25).
- 44 . . . . Death of Herod Agrippa I (Acts xii. 23).
- 44 . . . . *Cuspius Fadus, Procurator.*
- 45 . . . . Famine in Judea (Acts xi. 28).
- 45-49 . . St. Paul's First Missionary Journey (Acts xiii-xiv).

A.D.

- 46 . . . . *Tiberius Alexander, Procurator.*
- 47 . . . . *Ananias, High-priest, Succeeds Joseph, Son of Kami.*
- 48 . . . . *Ventidius Cumanus, Procurator.*
- 49-50 . . Paul and Barnabas Return to Antioch (Acts xiv. 26, 27).
- 51 . . . . The Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv. 1-34).
- 51-54 . . St. Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts xv. 35-xviii. 22).
- 52 . . . . *Felix, Procurator.*
- 53 . . . . *Herod Agrippa II, King.*
- 54 . . . . *Nero, Emperor.*
- 55 . . . . The Tumult at Jerusalem Caused by the Egyptian (Acts xxi. 38).
- 55-58 . . St. Paul's Third Missionary Journey (Acts xviii. 23-xxi. 16).
- 58 . . . . St. Paul Arrested at Jerusalem (Acts xxi. 17-xxiii. 22).
- 58-60 . . St. Paul a Prisoner for Two Years at Caesarea (Acts xxiii. 23-26).
- 59 . . . . *Deposition of Ananias the High-priest.*
- 60 . . . . *Portius Festus, Procurator.*
- 60 . . . . St. Paul in Autumn Sails from Caesarea for Rome (Acts xxvii. 1-9).
- 61 . . . . St. Paul in Spring Arrives in Rome (Acts xxviii. 16-19).
- 61-63 . . St. Paul a Prisoner in Rome for Two Years (Acts xxviii. 30, 31).
- 62 . . . . *Albinus, Procurator.*

## DECISIONS

### OF THE BIBLICAL COMMISSION, ON THE AUTHOR, TIME OF COMPOSITION, AND HISTORICAL TRUTH OF THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES<sup>1</sup>

I. It is asked whether in view, (a) especially of the tradition of the universal Church, which goes back to the earliest ecclesiastical writers; (b) of the internal evidence of the book itself, whether considered alone or in its relation to the Third Gospel, and in particular on account of the mutual bearing and connection of the prologue of each work (Luke i. 1-4; Acts i. 1, 2), — it should be held as certain that the book which is designated by the title, *Acts of Apostles* (πράξεις Ἀποστόλων), had as its author Luke the Evangelist?

*Reply:* In the Affirmative.

II. It is asked (1) whether the critical arguments drawn (a) from language and style, (b) from manner of narrative, (c) from unity of purpose and doctrine can demonstrate that the book *Acts of Apostles* should be attributed to only one author; and (2) whether consequently the opinion of certain modern writers, which holds that Luke is not the only author of the book, but that it had a number of authors, is devoid of all foundation?

*Reply:* In the Affirmative to both parts.

III. It is asked more in detail (1) whether those notable passages of the Acts in which the use of the third person is laid aside for the first person plural (*we sections*) weaken the unity and authenticity of composition; or (2) whether, on the contrary, they are a historical and philological confirmation of oneness of authorship and authenticity?

*Reply:* In the Negative to the first part, in the Affirmative to the second part.

<sup>1</sup> See study on these decisions by Rev. Walter Drum, S.J., in the *Ecclesiastical Review*, November, 1913.

IV. It is asked (1) whether from the fact that the book itself closes abruptly, with the mere mention of the two years of Paul's first Roman captivity, it may be inferred that the author wrote another volume, which has been lost, or that he intended to write one, and consequently that the time of the composition of the Acts can be placed long after that captivity; or (2) whether, on the contrary, we should justly and rightly hold that Luke finished the book towards the close of the first Roman captivity of the Apostle Paul?

*Reply:* In the Negative to the first part, in the Affirmative to the second part.

V. It is asked whether if you consider at once, (a) the frequent and familiar relationship that Luke undoubtedly enjoyed with the first and principal founders of the Palestinian church, as well as with Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles, whose fellow-worker he was in preaching the Gospel and whom he accompanied on his journeys; (b) the characteristic industry of Luke, and his care in seeking the testimony of others, and in observing things with his own eyes; and (c) particularly the manifest and striking agreement of Acts with the Epistles of Paul and with reliable historical data; it should be held for certain that Luke had in his possession sources worthy of all belief, and that he made use of them accurately, honestly, and faithfully, and so deserves full credence as a historian?

*Reply:* In the Affirmative.

VI. It is asked whether the historical authority of the Acts is rendered doubtful, or is even in any degree lessened, by the following difficulties which are now and then accustomed to be raised: (a) The supernatural facts that Luke narrates; (b) the compendious nature of some of his speeches, which some have explained by saying they are fictitious and adapted to the occasion; (c) the apparent discrepancies between some of his statements and Biblical or profane history; (d) the narrations that seem not to accord with other parts either of the Acts or of the rest of Holy Writ?

*Reply:* In the Negative.

ROME, June 12, 1913.

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